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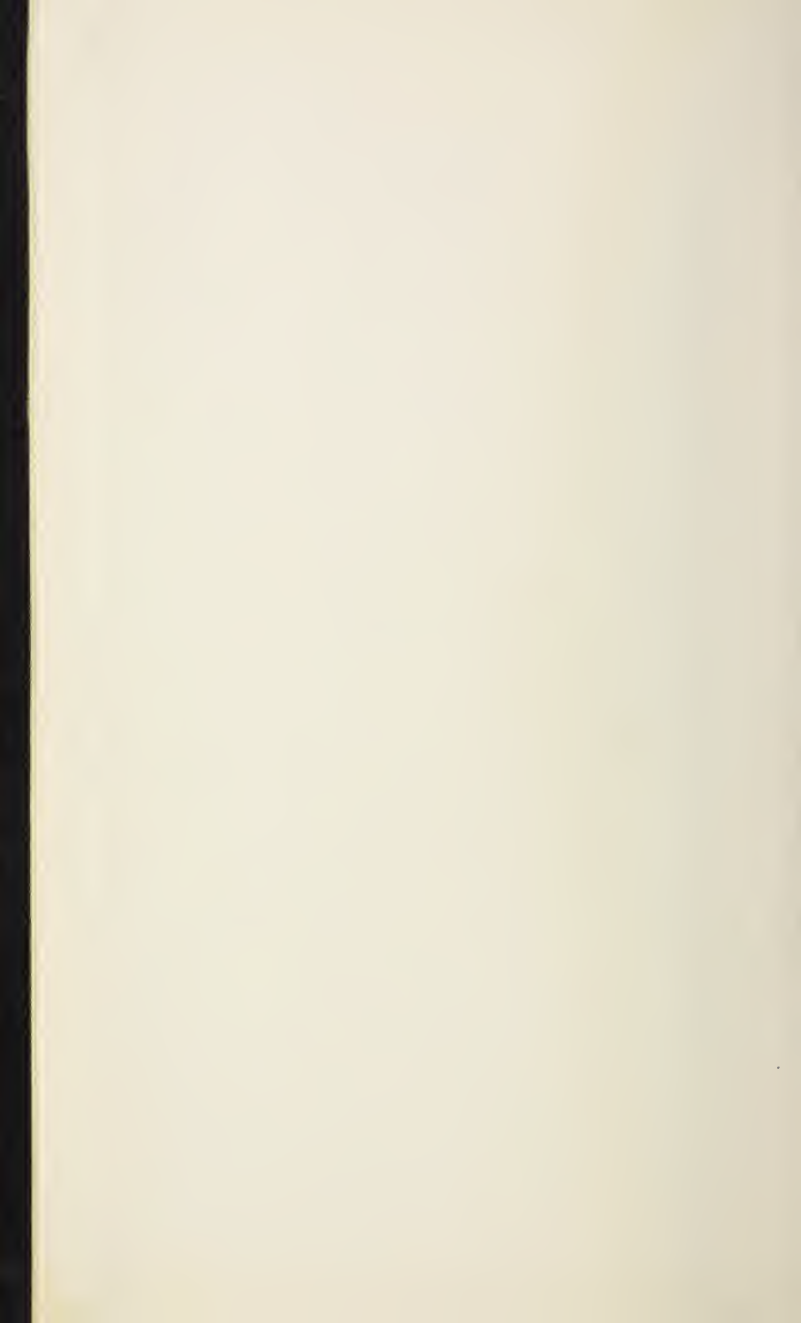
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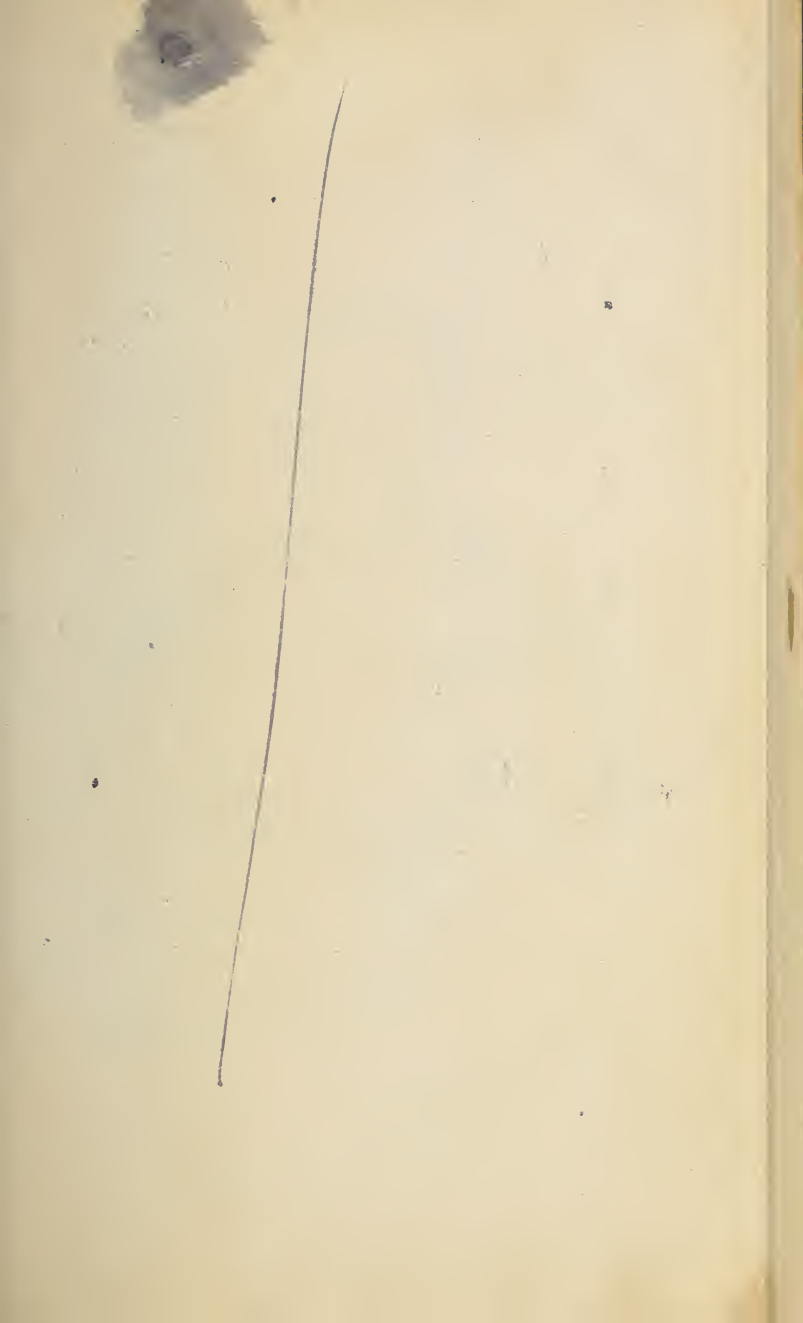
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R. P. F. LACORDAIRE.

LACORDAIRE'S

LETTERS TO YOUNG MEN.

EDITED BY THE

COUNT DE MONTALEMBERT.

TRANSLATED BY



THE REV. JAMES TRENOR.

BALTIMORE:

KELLY, PIET AND COMPANY,

1871.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE present work was promised about eighteen months ago in the "Memoir of the Abbé Lacordaire." The letters forming the present volume were, with one exception, written to young men. To those acquainted with the life of the writer, they will be particularly interesting. They will be glad of an opportunity of seeing into the depths of that great soul, of being allowed to become the spectators of his intimate relations, and of his unguarded moments.

They will discover that breadth and solidity which deep reflection begets in highly gifted minds, and will often marvel at the power of the man, who, in the few spare moments left him by his incessant labors, could compress into a line the reflection of years. Nor will they be less attracted by the easy innate nobleness of character evident in these pages ; by the firmness and warmth of his friendship, by the

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massive soundness of his principles, and the generosity of his great heart. No one will be surprised that such a man as Lacordaire should be singled out by Providence for the great work of converting the youth of France, nor that, under God, his splendid gifts should have succeeded in that work.

The idea that such a book as the present one might be serviceable to youth in this country, prompted its translation. Faults will doubtless be met with in these pages. That the task was not totally devoid of difficulty, and that the Translator did what he could not to disfigure the beautiful original in its present garb, will be his excuse with the discriminating reader.

ARCHIEPISCOPAL PALACE, PARIS, *Dec. 7, 1862.*

Dear Rev. Sir,

Thanks to you, I am in the way of spending some very pleasant hours. I thank you beforehand, and thank God for the carrying out of your project, which I am convinced will be attended with the most precious results.

These letters are exquisite. Your introduction greatly enhances the value of the book. Be persuaded of this, as well as of my earnest wishes for the complete success of the publication (which is inevitable) as also for the attainment of the end aimed at by you in all this.

Believe in my deep and affectionate regard in Christ,

F. N. CARD. MORLOT,
Archbishop of Paris.

BORDEAUX, *March 25, 1863.*

Rev. Sir,

We must do more than thank you : we must congratulate you again and again upon having done signal service to religion by the collecting and publishing under the head of *Letters of the Reverend Father Lacordaire to Young Men*, so precious a portion of the correspondence of that man of genius, who was, as you say, a great and holy religious. I am not astonished at the success with

which your book has already met, and anticipate a still greater one for it. An inestimable treasure for persons of every time of life, but more especially for youth, for the young who are good, and those who wish to be good, may be found in this collection of pious thoughts and sound advice, in which solid reasoning and great amiability are joined to the deepest tenderness. To gain over or hold youth to Jesus Christ was during his life the special mission of Father Lacordaire. He will continue this mission after his death, thanks to these letters, written in the secret of intimacy for one or two, which will speak however equally to all.

The fact is that it was not one or two, but all young men that the illustrious Dominican loved; all those souls redeemed by the Divine Blood were his life; and this generous, tender, devoted, and deep love which so well explains his taking up the office of a teacher during the latter years of his life, was the secret of his immense influence.

Our youth was first of all charmed by his lively and brilliant eloquence; it was attracted to him by that indescribable youthfulness which never deserted him; but the final triumph was owing to his charity, which fired youth more even than his eloquence. His heart won over theirs, which is the surest and most lasting of conquests: every pulsation of it is felt in those beautiful letters, in which we at times recognize the orator, but the general tone of which is marked by the simplicity of the confidant and friend.

He is not only like a father talking to his children. Although he is as tender and authoritative as a father, he lays aside the title, which would appear to put too

great a distance between him and those he loves, and adopts the more familiar title and language of a friend. He wants his age, his talent, and his renown to be forgotten, differences which were nothing in his eyes, because in the eyes of God they are nothing, in order that he may draw them to his heart.

Friendship, he says, *makes equals*: such is his doctrine. But beneath this apparent equality we see the parent whose bowels are moved, and a Christian adviser whose advice is obeyed; a shepherd who follows with wakeful eye his beloved sheep, warns them of danger, urges them, gathers them, scolds them when needful, and when one of them is about to go astray, runs after it, and brings it back to the fold.

What I admire above all is the ripeness and wisdom of his direction. I have pointed out in some of the other writings of Father Lacordaire generous illusions which prevented him from dealing sufficiently with facts. But here, as though in speaking to youth he was more cautious and more distrustful of his imagination, soundness, judiciousness, firmness or moderation are the order of the day. If he alludes to politics, it is only in a moderate and appropriate manner. It is simply in order to check the ardor of youth, to cry down passion and party spirit, and to raise souls above the troubles of life by directing their gaze to eternity.

His teaching is purely doctrinal and Christian. You have estimated him at his proper worth, Rev. Sir, in your excellent introduction to this work *dedicated to the youth of our country*, and this introduction is a good work added to the former.

You will find your reward in the good which the

publication has already done and which it will continue to do.

Receive, Rev. Sir, the expression of my best wishes

✠ FERDINAND CARD. DONNET,

Archbishop of Bordeaux.



ARCHIEPISCOPAL PALACE OF BESANÇON,

May 9, 1863.

Sir,

Your pious project of publishing Father Lacordaire's letters, and of thus laying open the secrets of his soul, the inspirations of his heart, and the active wisdom of his direction, is a benefit done to youth and a general advantage.

Father Lacordaire's merits as an orator have been diversely appreciated, but there can be but one opinion touching his merits as a religious, and his influence as a director.

The religious profession made a different man of him, who was only well known in his monastery, or outside his monastery in his private relations. Having seen him at Mattaincourt a few years ago, at the consecration of the church, I was struck with this change, I admired what grace had wrought in him in this respect, without detracting from his natural talent or his fire as an orator, and I said to myself: "*God is wonderful in His Saints.*" I little thought that this beautiful flower was so soon to fall, and this grain of pure frankincense to be consumed in the fire of its ardent charity.

Pray receive, sir, the assurance of my very distinguished and affectionate sentiments.

CESARIUS CARD. MATHIEU,
Archbishop of Besançon.



ARCHIEPISCOPAL PALACE OF TOURS,
December 12, 1862.

Reverend Sir,

Before thanking you for having sent me the *Letters of Father Lacordaire to Young Men*, I was desirous of looking through this precious collection. These letters could in nowise increase my admiration of the illustrious Dominican's talent, but they have increased my esteem for his piety and his character. One sees that he really thirsted after souls, and that to gain them over to Jesus Christ he used all the high faculties with which God had gifted him. The perusal of this book has given me a very clear insight into the inmost life of Father Lacordaire, whom I only knew by his writings and his preaching.

The publication of these letters was very opportune. You could have done nothing more advantageous for youth, which will read them with fruit. It will be a kind of continuation of the apostleship of this illustrious religious, snatched away but too soon from a generation upon which his preaching exercised great influence.

Receive, Rev. Sir, together with my thanks, the assurance of my high consideration.

* J. HIPPOLYTE,
Archbishop of Tours.

EPISCOPAL PALACE OF NANCY AND TOUL,
NANCY, *December 26, 1862.*

Rev. Sir,

You have been kind enough to send me the Letters of the *Reverend Father Lacordaire*, collected and published by you, with the idea doubtless that I should value your present very highly. I thank you for your kind attention, and am touched by your believing that I should, as indeed I do, sympathize with the ideas of so eminent a mind.

What you have now published of the Rev. Father Lacordaire's works, Rev. Sir, reveals a whole vein of his soul unknown to many, a vein of great richness and beauty. You show the man to those who have known only the orator, and they will thank you for it. Youth, above all, must be grateful to you for having presented them with these pages, in which they will find, together with accents of manly tenderness, enlightened and strengthening advice, and something too of those marvellous qualities which so long attracted and held them around the pulpit of Notre Dame. I am persuaded that this book will do good, and congratulate you on your share in its publication. With these congratulations and my thanks, pray receive, Dear Rev. Sir, the assurance of my best sentiments of esteem and affection.

✱ G. Bp. of Nancy.

EPISCOPAL PALACE OF MARSEILLES,
MARSEILLES, *Jan. 20, 1863.*

I cannot thank you too much. I am reading the *Letters of Father Lacordaire* which you so kindly sent me, and I find in them such good and beautiful things, that frequently my heart is quite overcome by them. You have added a very precious volume to the works of that man of faith and genius. We shall all be indebted to you for having done so. Pray receive my heartfelt thanks, as well as the expression of my affectionate and devoted feelings for you.

✠ PATRICK,
Bishop of Marseilles.

EPISCOPAL PALACE OF LA ROCHELLE.
LA ROCHELLE, *March 27, 1863.*

Dear Rev. Sir,

I thank you for the letters of Father Lacordaire, which you were so kind as to send me, and I ought to beg your pardon for not having done so before.

The perusal of this volume has greatly interested me; certain pages in particular produced the sweetest emotion in me. "Words are a mirror," said a father of the Church, "and through words we see souls." This thought often struck me as I saw the beautiful soul of Father Lacordaire behind those intimate phrases, in which his heart showed itself fully in the confidences of friendship.

At certain periods of my life I have had dealings with

Father Lacordaire, and I always honored the nobleness and loftiness of his character. One may differ with him on many points, and this *liberty in doubtful questions* is one of the things which most strike us in the life and works of the most illustrious doctors of the Church. But uprightness of heart, strong and serene virtue, tender love for men, and eminently evangelical cast of character, are very rare qualities, which have always strongly attached me to him who was your friend. These virtues were, to borrow a saying of Origen, the odor of his soul, and I think it was difficult to come in contact with him without detecting its fragrance.

The letters published by you introduce us into this sanctuary redolent of the sweetest and strongest of virtues. May the continued publication of this correspondence disclose to us more and more thoroughly the soul of this great monk, of whom Madam Swetchine said, "He will be known only by his letters."

Pray receive, dear Rev. Sir, the expression of my affectionate and devoted sentiments.

✠ JOHN FRANCIS,
Bishop of La Rochelle.

EPISCOPAL PALACE OF CARCASSONNE,
CARCASSONNE, *April 1, 1863.*

Rev. Sir,

I had read with eagerness the first edition of the *Letters of Father Lacordaire*, which you have been kind enough to send me, and am not at all astonished at the great success they have had.

You express a desire to hear my opinion about this

book ; I am very happy to do so, and thank you for the opportunity you give me of paying a fresh homage to the beautiful and pure genius of him who wrote these letters.

The title of the collection reminds me of a thought to which I gave but feeble utterance over his hardly closed tomb ; it is that Father Lacordaire was, above all, the incomparable apostle of youth. God had given him that inimitable freshness of ideas, imagination, style and language which act irresistibly on young minds and young hearts.

I discovered in these letters this same manner and charm. I found this same tender affection of the master for his pupils, of the father for his children, of the older and wiser friend for his young and inexperienced friends. Many masters, fathers, and friends, know how to love, but few know how to say so as usefully and as piously as he.

It would have been a very great pity, had the precious letters just edited, remained in the portfolios of those who received them. When a man has the genius of Father Lacordaire, he does not write to such and such a person, but to all France, just as it is to all France that he speaks.

Everyone, then, will thank you, Rev. Sir, for having made a common treasure of what has hitherto been the wealth of but too small a number of souls.

But allow me at the same time to congratulate you sincerely upon the introduction which heads this work. Your long and intimate relations with Father Lacordaire may easily be guessed from it. Father Lacordaire is one of those men whose friendship and daily intercourse

have stamped themselves upon those who enjoyed this happiness. This influence was inevitable, and no one was desirous of escaping it. I saw in your introduction traces of the contact of your friend Father Lacordaire the contact of his heart as well as of his mind.



EPISCOPAL PALACE OF NANTES.

AGEN, *April 9, 1863.*

Rev. Sir,

I follow you, as far as possible, in your works with great interest, and especially in the acts of your filial piety for Father Lacordaire. As I have been away from Nantes for several months endeavoring to recruit my health by a winter in the south of France, I was desirous of reading your collection of the *Letters to Young Men*, but was unaware you had been so extremely kind as to forward me a copy to Nantes.

On receiving your letter I hastened to send for it. As yet I have been able to read but a few pages of it; but I beg you to add my meed of praise to that of all the worthy prelates you mention. I feel certain that a thorough perusal will only confirm me in the same opinion.

I was extremely fond of Father Lacordaire. I supported him at Notre Dame as far as lay in my power. As a bishop, I am singularly grateful to him for the change he has wrought in the present generation, and for having opened the way for a multitude of works and institutions which before him were simply out of the question.

Continue the pious care you bestow upon his memory,

the sweet fragrance of which is not lost upon a multitude of young men.

Do not let his writings be lost, which, contrary to an opinion which has gained some ground, are destined to do almost as much good as his preaching. Do not be discouraged by the injustice done to your illustrious friend—he has many more admirers than adversaries.

I shall be happy to see you again some day, Rev. Sir, and in the meantime, beg you to receive my thanks, and the assurance of my most sincere devotedness.

† ALEXANDER,

Bishop of Nantes.

ARCHIEPISCOPAL PALACE OF GRENOBLE,
LA FERRANDIERE, NEAR LYONS, *June 19, 1863.*

Reverend Sir,

I am very tardy indeed in thanking you for the valuable present you have made me, and in telling you what I think of the publication of the *Letters of the Rev. Father Lacordaire to Young Men*. It has been said that they showed a hitherto unknown side of his great soul. That is true as far as the public is concerned who knew but the exterior; but when the interior had been entered, it was seen exactly as shown in these letters.

It was given to Father Lacordaire to fulfil a fine mission in regard to society, and specially of French youth; the publication you have just issued, Rev. Sir, is the best way of continuing it and securing its fruits.

Receive, Rev. Sir, with the expression of my gratitude for the publication itself, the assurance of my most distinguished sentiments.

† M. A., Bishop of Grenoble.

EPISCOPAL PALACE OF ORLEANS.

ORLEANS, *May 8, 1863.**My dear Friend,*

To say I have only just finished the *Letters of Father Lacordaire* is saying very little indeed; but it is the truth, and I assure you that in this negligence, or rather this sacrifice, I deserve more compassion than scolding. For the last three months I have been over head and ears in work, and have not had for intellectual enjoyment or the joys of the heart a single hour. I have not even always had time to do what I look upon as my duty.

In short, I was only able to complete my perusal of these letters in my pastoral visit, while going from one village to another.

But I have at last read them, and I may indeed say that they have solaced me, charmed me, sometimes astonished, and frequently enraptured me.

I say astonished me; for this volume reveals a whole vein in the nature of Father Lacordaire, not sufficiently known, a vein of admirable richness, depth, and tenderness.

I said that Father Lacordaire's, as well as Father de Ravignan's, was a great soul. These letters add to my admiration, because they show us this soul in a new light, with a fresh charm and fresh greatness.

It is impossible to come upon a more genuine nature, one more independent and subject to God, a nobler or more consistent life, a more affectionate heart, or one more firm even in its tenderest affections. And what

more even than his very talent and eloquence explains to me his wonderful power of doing good, is that spirit of Christian mortification and efficacious penance, that ardent love of our Lord, that deep devotion to His cross and passion. This is what made Father Lacordaire a holy Monk, worthy of becoming the restorer and reformer of a great order.

I should like to see your book in the hands of all the young men I have known and loved, or rather in the hands of all Christian young men, in order that they may feel the value of their faith ; and also in the hands of all those who have not yet the happiness to believe, in order that they may get a glimpse of the joy there is in purity of heart, and what safety the human mind enjoys, despite the weakness arising from its natural fickleness, in the unvarying firmness of the Catholic Creed.

Receive, then, my dear friend, all my congratulations upon a publication which does such honor to the memory you venerate, and which may be so useful.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

✠ FELIX,

Bishop of Orleans.

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LETTERS TO YOUNG MEN.

I.

God's Hour.

PARIS, *May* 11, 1824.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

ALL that I have to tell you might be said in very few words, and yet I feel I should like to write a long letter to you. I am giving up the bar: we shall never meet again there. Our dreams of the last five years will never be realized. I am going to enter the seminary of St. Sulpice to-morrow. Only yesterday I was full of worldly fancies, although religion had already some share in my thoughts: glory was still my day-dream. To-day my hopes are higher, and I covet here below nothing but obscurity and peace. I am very much changed, and I assure you I cannot say how it has come about. When I look at the working of my mind during the last five years, my starting-point, the phases through which my mind

has passed, and the final result of this long and difficult process, I am myself astounded, and feel impelled to adore the hand of God. All this, my friend, is realized thoroughly by him alone who has forsaken error for truth, who has his previous ideas well before him, sees the connection between them, as well as the oddity of their combinations, their gradual development, and compares them at the different stages of his conviction. A really sublime moment is that when the last ray of light breaks in upon the soul, and marshals into a single group all the scattered disconnected truths there. There is such a vast difference between the moment which follows, and the moment which precedes this one, between what we were before, and what we are after, that the word *grace* has been invented to convey the idea of this magic stroke, of this light from on high. I fancy I see a man groping his way blindfolded; the bandage is gradually withdrawn; he has a glimmering of the daylight, and at the moment when the handkerchief falls, he stands in the broad sunlight.

II.

Farewell to the World.

SEMINARY OF ISSY, *June*, 1824.

MY OLD AND DEAR COLLEAGUE,*

JUST two or three lines in a handwriting perhaps unfamiliar to you, from one to whom you never appeared indifferent. But very lately I received from several quarters proofs of your kind remembrance, and of the interest you take in me. I am glad your friendship has followed with interest a step which in its motives and its results will have so great an influence upon my life. You saw me vacillating between error and truth, loving them equally because unable to distinguish the one from the other; the hour marked out by God for my enlightenment has come: He has shown me the powerlessness of reason, and the necessity of faith.

Being thus drawn closer to you by my religious convictions, I have the happiness to find your counterpart in a brother whom I regret not having known sooner. I feel, too, that I am parting with you by

* Written to a young barrister.

giving up the profession which decides your future, and in which people say you have already made way; but if your success no longer urges me to emulation, if I no longer dream of the trophies of Miltiades in order to become a Themistocles, believe me, they will always be dear to me, and news of your glory always gratifying.

Adieu, my dear friend, don't lose sight of me: come sometimes in spirit to the desert: I embrace you with all my heart.



III.

The Seminary of St. Sulpice.—The Church and Progress.

SEMINARY OF ISSY, 1825.

YOU would never guess one of my delights: it is to begin my youth over again; I mean the age between childhood and youth, with the moral strength belonging to a more advanced age. At college we are still too much of children: we cannot form a correct estimate of men and things; our notions are too few to enable us to choose friends properly, and bind them to us by strong ties. The higher stages of

friendship are unknown to such weak souls, to such untutored minds. And then in the world we are not in a position to form any very strong ties: whether it be that men do not live there in such intimacy, or that interest and self-love glide into what seem the purest unions, or that the heart feels less at ease amid the noise and bustle of society. Friendship has a better field among a hundred and forty young men who are constantly seeing one another, whose notions and feelings are similar, and who are almost all like chosen flowers transplanted into solitude. I take a pleasure in being liked, in keeping up in the seminary something of the amenity of the world, a little of the polish of society. I am more simple, more communicative, more affable than I was: rid of that love of display which entered perhaps into my composition: not anxious about my future, with which I am satisfied whatever it may be: dreaming of poverty as I used once to do of wealth; I live quietly with my fellow-students and myself.

I am not afraid, as a believer, of those ideas of order, justice, strong and lawful liberty, which were my first conquests. Christianity is not a law of bondage; and if it respect the hand of God which sometimes raises up tyrants, it draws up where obedience degenerates into guilty cowardice. It has not for-

gotten that its children were free at a time when the world was groaning in fetters under a series of brutal emperors, and that they had formed beneath the earth a society which spoke of humanity under the palace of Nero. Is it not the Church which has introduced into our institutions a spirit of mildness and harmony unknown to antiquity? It is religion which has made modern Europe what she is by its stability amid the ruin of nations, by adapting itself to circumstances, to times, and places, without ever abating an iota of its unshaken principles. The Church had the words reason and liberty on her lips when the inalienable rights of the human race were threatened with shipwreck.

She preached faith and obedience when she saw mental and moral debauch pave the way for a revolution which was to destroy liberty by anarchy, and reason by the very altars raised to it. Admirable wisdom, which can adapt itself to all the requirements of civilization, which at one time quickens, at another slackens the progress of ages, in order to keep them to that wise mean where peace and virtue are found, and from which human things deviate by an inevitable ebb and flow! power wonderful in the variety of its action: firm and enduring in power and conscience, snatching nations from tyranny by liberty,

from anarchy by power, and from two opposite extremes leading them to the same point.

IV.

Protestantism and Rationalism.

ROME, *January* 10, 1837.

I GOT your letter very late, my dear friend. I thank you for all the tokens of confidence it contains, and am very desirous to testify my appreciation of them. It is unfortunate we cannot see one another for a short time, and chat together with open heart; letters are always very cold and short when compared with conversation, and sometimes mutual pain may be unintentionally given in them. A look tells us what to unsay or explain, whilst, when a letter is once gone, the writer is not at hand to explain it to the friend who receives it. I handled you roughly in my first, because you did not seem to me child-like enough, and also because that is the best way of gaining possession of a soul sincerely desirous of being guided. You are aware that when postulants presented themselves at the gates of the old monasteries to give themselves to God, they frequently met with a reception calculated to disgust

them, in order that this severity might show whether the soul of the postulant was already humble, and up to the practice of the virtues it aspired to. We are too fond of being flattered, even by our friends: I am then glad you have forgiven me the roughness of my first embrace, and that you came back to the charge kind and confiding.

Your picture of Germany does not surprise me much. By severing itself from Catholic unity, it lost the very fountain-head of great ideas. Those countries which are still Catholic, whether under a Protestant government or independent, catch something of the schismatical spirit with which they are in perpetual contact, and we may say that Protestantism is the one *souvenir* of all Germany, her blood, her life. France, on the contrary, by remaining Catholic, has raised herself to a position, fraught indeed with some difficulties, but which will sooner or later show its power. Amongst the men whom you mention as the latest glories of Germany, there are at least two who have been evil geniuses.

I allow that great intellectual criminals may have glorious names, but this glory is of an order disallowed by Christian hearts. I should like you to get at once into the habit of scorning the greatest renown when purchased by a pernicious influence, and never

to value either in the author or the man of action anything but the good and the true. To write is to act. Stubborn persistence in writing what is false is a crime deserving of the most shameful punishment, the very success of which does but increase its guilt. The Gospel of Jesus Christ changed the world: whoever does not write in conformity with the Gospel is the enemy of God and man, much more so than the frail creature which simply yields to its passions. Sinful weakness deserves compassion, but the pride which attacks truth, inspires no kind feeling.

As to Vico, of whom you also speak to me, his historical system, as far as I know it, tends to destroy the certitude of facts and traditions; he makes myths and allegories of all events around which time has thrown a haze, and he is consequently false and dangerous.

Let me beg of you, my dear friend, not to let yourself be imposed upon by modern writings. They are nearly all pride-stricken, infected with sensualism, doubts, and prophecies, remarkable only for the boldness of the poets who indulge in them. Study the ancients closely. The Pagans themselves, such as Plato, Plutarch, Cicero, and many others, are preferable a thousand times over to the great mass of our modern writers; they were religious men, full of

respect for tradition, who looked only for the perfecting of man in his daily intercourse with the Divinity. The others are more or less open enemies of Jesus Christ, that is of the sublime work which has spread over the earth the spirit of penance and humility: the work which the corrupted heart of man will never forgive Christianity, and which has hurried so many great modern minds into impiety, whilst those of ancient times cherished so deep a reverence for religion. For the last three or four centuries literature has been in a state of revolt against the truth. Even the good, weakened in their deepest convictions by the contact of error, have put forward false or fatal opinions in their best works. Consequently, my dear friend, you must be very choice in your reading.

I shall be staying here some time longer; indeed, I do not know when I shall leave; if you were coming some day, that would give me a little patience. I want to see and embrace you. Adieu, my dear friend, pray for me, love me a little, and be convinced that the communications of your heart will always be welcome.

V.

Fragments of a Rule of Life.

ROME, *January 11, 1837.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I SEND you the rule of life I promised you. You are already so thoroughly religious that I need not insist upon your following this rule I have marked out for you. It is already in your heart, and it is less as a remainder of your resolutions that I send it, than a proof of the share you have in all my thoughts.

I beg of you to be faithful to your affection for me, so necessary to my happiness. Mine is more than yours already: it would be beyond my power to withdraw it or take from its depth. You will be ever clasped to my bosom as a son and a friend.

Adieu.

RULE.

. Spend a fair share of every day upon the serious occupations of your state, and look upon this work as one of your first duties, and as the personal accomplishment of that sentence passed by God upon our first father. *In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread.*

As to the lawful pleasures of the mind, the heart, or the senses, indulge in them with gratitude and moderation, drawing up sometimes in order to punish yourself, without waiting to be forced to do so by necessity.

Bear constantly in mind that we have two great vices to beat down and destroy, pride and sensuality; and two great virtues to acquire, humility and penance.

Raise from time to time your heart to God, and think upon the painful passion of our Lord, in order to neutralize by the contemplation of His mangled and bleeding body the involuntary impression produced upon you by the objects you are condemned to see.

Choose some poor person, and relieve him regularly according to your means, and look upon him as *Jesus Christ Himself*, visit him, talk to him, and if you have courage enough, kiss his clothes or his feet sometimes.

Fasten yourself in spirit to His cross, hand yourself over to the executioner: to dwell upon the thought of chastisement, and undergo it mentally, is a suffering in itself. The martyrs had immolated themselves a hundred times in their hearts before they were sacrificed in reality.

Think too of the number of slaves and poor who get scarcely anything but a little bad bread moistened with their tears and even with their blood.

Endeavor to be good, amiable, simple in your dealings with every one, and do not consider the life of a Christian as necessarily one of moroseness and melancholy. Saint Paul is continually saying to the faithful, *rejoice!* The real Christian is filled with interior joy even in the midst of sufferings: he bears his cross good-humoredly; martyrdom and opprobrium don't affect his spirits; he offers his body to be afflicted as Providence sees fit without losing his serenity; he turns into roses chains, hunger, thirst, rags, fire, scourges, the sword, death. He loves and is loved, what more does he need?



VI.

Upon Sadness.

ROME, *August 19, 1837.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOU know how much attached I am to you. I learn with grief that you are sad and taciturn. It is quite true that, humanly speaking, you have

had a very unfortunate year : but, on the other hand, you have reason for consolation. Be careful, my dear friend, not to give way to gloomy sadness, which would gradually ruin you to no purpose. Religion is not a yoke of terror : she is all love and confidence to her real children. If our passions give us trouble, we must look upon them gently, as proofs of our frailty, but like children who are not frightened at their littleness when by the side of their father. Melancholy is a fashion we must fight down. I too know what it is. But the greater the influence of God upon my soul became, the less hold melancholy had over me. I should be very much distressed to think that you are not happy and contented. Oh ! my dear friend, don't afflict me with the thought that you are unhappy. You have been so bountifully endowed by Providence that you can easily muster up courage to bear with your own defects, and with the inevitable shortcomings of everything human. You are young, full of health, of first-rate talent, good and amiable. You only want to know what you really are in order to become proud and vain. If the lightning of truth has struck you, it is not for your destruction : but to raise you by doing away with your natural weaknesses.

I shall be leaving Rome, if possible, on the 15th

of September. I should be really delighted to meet you once again on Italian soil. Pray that this may come about, and love me ever from the bottom of your heart as I do you.

VII.

Youth. — The Gift of Lovingness.

METZ, *January 2, 1838.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE heard of you in a letter from your respected mother, which was sent to Rome and then came back to France. I read it with joy, like a letter from a friend about whom one is uneasy. You have had a hard year's work, you have been ill, you have tended the sick, you have travelled alone, seen brilliant society, and I am told that in all these circumstances you have been good-natured, which gives me real pleasure. Tell me how old you are; I don't remember your ever having done so. Youth is a lovely time of life. As children we have not enough sensibility nor knowledge of things: nothing is deep. In our prime we know too much, and no longer please so much; the heart has less calls upon

it and is more wary, and neither gives nor receives so fully. But between twenty and thirty, what vigor, what fulness! We love and are loved so quickly. I should like to know if you are affectionate, if you feel the value of another soul, if affection is your great leaning. Every man has one predominant bent, which forms the heart of all the others. In some it is vanity, that chilling sentiment which makes people think of nothing but show, which loves to be surrounded by flatterers, to be looked at. In others it is the lust of power, a stern passion which would have all men slaves. The loving heart lives chiefly within itself, not in selfishness, but in that holy seclusion in which we require but one other being, where its memory suffices to fill up a day, where we don't trouble ourselves about the crowd and its ideas, where the exterior goes for nothing. This is the passion of all great and noble souls. I hope it may be yours; not that it is unattended by great dangers,—for where are there not dangers?—but because the reefs once passed, we taste the only true consolation here below. True love is pure: it is of the heart and not of the senses. The life of the senses wanes, falls away; and no one is such a stranger to love as a debauchee. The purer the heart, the more it is purified and ennobled by the love of God, and the more

capable it is of real and sterling love. I am sure, my dear friend, that you will always keep the pure and calm region in which a fondness for creatures is sanctified by the love of God, and that you will not give way to unmanly affections, the end of which is an empty gratification of the senses, fleeting and bitter as smoke.

Let me tell you, in short, that I am at Metz, a strong and large town, where I am giving conferences upon religion. After Easter I shall go to Liege and Brussels for a few days, thence to a Benedictine abbey to pass the summer. I hope to hear from you before then. I embrace you tenderly, although from afar. Present my respectful compliments to your mother, and give me a share in the affection you bear her.



VIII.

Upon Lent.

METZ, *Feb.* 19, 1838.

LENT is at hand, and I owe it to my tender affection for you to give you a few explanations upon this time set aside for penance. You yourself asked me to do so, consequently I am after all only obeying you.

Penance is, as you are aware, one of the chief virtues of the Christian. It is made up of humility of heart, which sees the enormity of our faults, and our natural corruption, and of the mortification of the body, which both humbles the mind, and curbs the bad passions of which the flesh is the source.

If the Christian always practised real and courageous penance he would be a saint. But the Christian is weak: he lives in the midst of the world, he leads like others a soft and easy, even when not a criminal life. This is why the Church has instituted, or rather had marked out by apostolic tradition, a particular time for penance. This is the period preceding the time when we commemorate the passion and resurrection of the Saviour. It consists of but forty days, signified by the term *Quadragesima*.

On Ash-Wednesday the faithful repair to the church, cast themselves at the feet of the priest, who makes the sign of the cross on their foreheads with ashes, saying: Remember, man, thou art but dust, and unto dust thou shalt return!

Fasting is a penance laid upon the faithful for the whole of Lent with the exception of Sunday. Fasting, in the strictest sense of the term, means taking one meal a day after midday, and this made up of nothing very substantial, vegetables and fish. This

penance, which is nothing out of the way, which the ancient philosophers recommended to their disciples, is very useful because it weakens the body, curbs our intemperance, and makes us much fitter for prayer and meditation. By food man partakes of the lowest creatures, of the flesh and blood of brutes: by fasting he rises above bodily wants, and yields to them only in what is absolutely necessary.

Go to confession at the beginning of Lent as a preparation for it, and again shortly before Easter, in order to fit you for communion the following day. At confession do not consider the man, but God who humbled himself for your salvation so far as to die like an outcast and a culprit. Doubtless it is a consolation to kneel at the feet of a priest one reveres and loves, but even suppose we don't know him, we must see Jesus Christ in him, and confess interiorly that we have deserved public humiliation, and not simply secret ones. Open your soul to your confessor, do whatever penance he imposes on you without asking for any particular one, and be persuaded that a well spent Lent will be a very meritorious work of expiation.

Just consider how incapable you are of great things, and don't despise little ones.

IX.

On the Church.

ABBEE OF SOLESMES, *June 24, 1838.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I WAS expecting with some impatience to hear from you, for I cannot do without you. Your letter dropped in exactly on the feast of my patron, St. John the Baptist. I thanked God for having sent me so sweet a present on that day. Your letter is the reflex of all the good and amiable qualities God has given you, as well as of a sound mind which sees difficulties, but can work out solutions.

This is the shortest road to truth. Many minds see the *weak point* of the true; this comes from its immense disproportion with our faculties. The number of those who see its *strong* side is less; this comes of the connection between all that goes to make it up. Truth is an infinite web which bears us up. Children as we are, we can neither measure nor tear it. The objection that troubles you is one touching the Unity of the Church. You have understood, my very dear friend, that unity is the characteristic mark of truth. Cicero understood and said so before you.

The phrase which embodied the remark of that great man is what most powerfully urged Queen Christina of Sweden to become a Catholic.

You will tell me that *unity of mind*, the chief of all, can only exist in the Church inasmuch as the Church is infallible, and that Catholics themselves do not agree with regard to the *seat of infallibility* in the Church.

Were this the case you would be right in maintaining that unity in the Catholic Church is an impossibility, since this infallibility itself is a subject of division. Such however is not the case, and I will give you a convincing proof of it: it is that as a fact unity does exist in the Catholic Church, and that consequently Catholics know well and with certainty where resides infallibility. All know well, all believe, all are obliged to believe, unless they are desirous of becoming schismatics and heretics, that the *bishops, with the Pope at their head, are infallible in matters of faith and morals*.

Outside this dogma each one is free to adopt his own opinion. For you must remember, my dear friend, that a vast number of questions are not yet defined by Catholic dogma, and are controverted matters. The Church, enlightened by the word of Jesus Christ, of the apostles and prophets, and as-

sisted by the Holy Ghost, holds a certain number of necessary truths which she propounds and defends as the heritage of the human race. They are her treasure: they are the common treasure. Woe to him who lays hands upon them! As to the rest, which are more or less bound up with these necessary truths, they are open to discussion. Thus with regard to infallibility, the Church affirms as part of her creed, that *the bishops, with the Pope at their head, are infallible in matters of faith and morals.*

Outside this truth there is a conflict of opinions. Some, like the Count de Maistre, maintain that the Pope himself, *in his capacity of Pope*, speaking doctrinally to the whole Church, according to the duty of his charge, is infallible; since otherwise, if he could teach error, one could not imagine how the Holy See is the foundation on which the Church is built. Others do not allow this consequence, and think that the decrees of the Sovereign Pontiff are only *irreformable* or infallible, inasmuch as the bishops accept them either tacitly or expressly. This is a family discussion, which is no bar to unity, since all Catholics submit as soon as the *Pope and the bishops have spoken.* If you were to read our big theology books, you would see these two classes of ideas at every turn. The one class is necessary, the other free: the one

forming part of the Catholic creed, the other not forming part of it, although not devoid of interest and having sometimes very grave consequences.

You will perhaps ask why God has left so many questions open to discussion. You might as well ask why God has not revealed everything. Now God has revealed the principles in order to serve as foundations; He has not done exactly the same with the consequences, in order to give our liberty play, like a mother who holds her child up by leading strings, but is delighted to see him try and walk like a man. You must bear in mind too, that this infallibility may, at any moment, transfer ideas from the realm of opinion to that of dogma, and consequently from the free to the necessary order. A simple decision of the Church works this change, and she never withholds that decision from the human race in case of need. Seated in the midst of minds, unchangeable like God whose Spirit she has, the Church diffuses in a wonderful manner light and heat, drawing to herself every soul of good will, judging human ideas by the standard of divine ones, and welding together in admirable peace the very differences she allows to exist among her children.

Their liberty gives her no uneasiness, for she knows on the one hand, the point at which she will

check them, and on the other she is certain they will stop at her bidding. It is much the same kind of feeling as that of God about the ocean. On the contrary, Protestant liberty recognizes no bounds, and is destructive of all unity. The Protestant has not a single dogma to serve as a centre of unity or a rallying point. He is his own unity: in other words, his unity is something essentially variable, a cloud, a dew-drop. His individuality itself does not constitute unity: he is *alone* without the possibility of being *one*; God is *one* without being able to be *alone*, and His Church in like manner. We will hold over the different incidental points arising out of the chief objection for our subsequent conversations. These details would take too long. Not that I am disinclined to talk at length with you, my dear friend; God knows it does not tire me: your candor does quite the contrary. But, as you say, everything must have an end, even that to which we are most inclined, and moreover I think you yourself will now be able to solve the secondary difficulties.

I come now to your misgivings touching the salvation of one who loved you so tenderly, and who on her deathbed pronounced those beautiful and Christian words to which in great part we may reasonably attribute your conversion to the Catholic faith. God

has, like yourself, laid these words up in His heart, and to them I undoubtedly owe the happiness of knowing and loving you. Now, why should you fear that the Catholic Church would inspire afflicting thoughts touching your loving Mother? God alone judges man; He alone, at the hour of death, weighs his life; He it is who puts into the scales what he knew and what he did not, what he has done, and what he might have done, what He gave him, and what He withheld, good and evil, insuperable obstacles, and, like a merciful Master, He fills up the measure of love which saves, there where there is love enough to deserve an increase. Possibly the grace which is pressing you is but a superabundance of that given your mother when she prayed for you. Look upon her as the cause of your conversion. Be convinced you are fulfilling her last wish:—"I feel assured that the memory of my tender love for my dear son will suffice to keep him virtuous, and to make him cling to the Lord, the source of all grace and all virtue."

There is much more that I could say! Do not suppose your long letters will tire me; you cannot let me have them too long. Treat me just like you would an old friend of your own age. I am not uneasy about the objections which suggest themselves

to your mind, I know too well the hold God has taken of your soul to look upon them as anything else but a course of gymnastics which you want to strengthen you in truth.

I think the conclusion of M. de Maistre's *Pape* will please you better than the opening, which is slightly too scholastic a controversy, and which is unsuited to your present state of mind. There is no one book which has not the disadvantage of not being written specially for us. The living word, issuing from a soul which understands ours, is much more powerful. I am always uneasy when I recommend books, because scarcely any single book will be precisely suited to any one particular man. The soul, on the contrary, requires but a moment to read into another, and give her what she wants. I am consequently yearning for the moment when we shall again take up our conversations. I shall be in Paris on the 18th of July; I shall immediately closet myself with you, and, by God's grace, finish the work already begun.

Pray fervently and read carefully every day, and write me long letters. Don't call me, My dear Sir, in your letters, but, My dear Friend, for I am very fond of you. I not only allow, but I order you to treat me as your heart may suggest. Adieu, my dear friend, I press you to my heart.

X.

A Conversion.

BOLOGNA, *September 19, 1838.*

I GOT your letter, my dear friend, just as I was leaving Rome; thus, the great fear I was in of not hearing from you before leaving, was dispelled. Had I gone without hearing from you, it would have been a heavy penance to me. God did not so will it, and I thank Him for it from the bottom of my heart. Although I have had a friend with me for the last few days, you cannot imagine the sadness that lays hold of me when I have to leave a place where I have taken root, and have to go alone from inn to inn without ever meeting a familiar face, or hearing a kindly word. I have been tied down to a life of solitude for years together, and to-day I am really astonished how I managed it, loneliness is such a punishment to me! I got to Bologna yesterday morning; it is a large and beautiful city. My only aim in visiting it was to see the body of St. Dominic, which is here. To-morrow I start for Milan, and almost at every step I whisper to myself, that I am

nearing you. You fill my solitude; this little room, where I am waited on like a lord for my money, and where, meals over, I am left as solitary as an owl. I visit the churches. Many of them are very fine; but nothing so tires me as seeing too many fine things at once. Admiration weighs down, but does not move. Two hours of this kind of walking undo me terribly. And yet how much of it have I done in my life! St. Dominic's tomb is of white marble, not in the present style, not colossal, in a church at the other end of the town, in a kind of desert.

There St. Dominic breathed his last: numbers of monks have dwelt there, and the greatest men from different quarters of the world have met there. To-day the monastery is all but deserted; what is tenanted, is filled in great part by an Austrian regiment: the troopers drink, smoke, and swear, where saints used to fast, pray, and write. To-morrow I shall say Mass over the body of St. Dominic, and I will pray to God to keep you good and pious.

Your letter rejoiced and touched me. I think you love me, for you lay aside pride with me, and you tell me your faults. Your friends were right in getting angry with you. Nothing wounds a friend like a want of confidence. What is friendship but the union of two souls? If there is no confidence,

where is the union? The more important the movement which changed your heart, the greater their right to know it, to advise you, to encourage, and even to check you.

You might possibly have had a few struggles more, and then the victory over death and error would have been more glorious, and less open to misinterpretation. I am not at all of opinion that a natural liking you took to me, was the cause of your conversion. Your coming to me shows clearly that you were converted before even seeing me. God had sent down upon you that secret flame which I so well know from my own experience, and that of many others; a flame of which the possessor is unconscious, and which awaits but a breath in order to consume the "old man" with his wretched ideas, and the passions he believed so invincible.

When a man, especially a young man, comes to me for the first time, I can feel whether he is one of God's conquests; I descry the unction of the Christian in his features, his thoughts, his voice, and if with you I acted so boldly, so promptly, and surely, it was because I *recognized* you. Had you met with souls, such as are sometimes to be met with, untouched by the grace of God, you would see that in the matter of conversion man is powerless; that a thousand

lives laid down within an hour, an eloquence enough to make a statue weep, are utterly thrown away.

You must get used to having your actions distorted; every one sees them through his own medium, with his own ideas and feelings: our very friends, except those bathed in the same divine waters, do not always understand us. We must excuse little shortcomings in everything. God loves us tenderly, although we are so frail, so vain, so prone to evil! He loves us because the little love we return Him touches Him, so mighty is a little love!

I saw two admirable young converts at Rome. France is big with wonders to-day. We cannot love her too well, nor despise her calumniators too heartily.

In a few days I shall be at Dijon: you must address your letters there until further notice. For, my dear friend, we shall not meet until the end of October. Three months absence!

XI.

La Quercia.—An Expectant and Trustful Soul.

LA QUERCIA, *April 16, 1839.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

IT is now a long time since we have heard from each other. I have made good way. I write to you from a cell, with the Dominican habit on, and by God's grace I will never put it off again! I was clothed with it a week ago at Rome, in a chapel of the Dominican church called the *Minerva*, in presence of a few friends and a respectable number of French. I should have been glad if you had been there to congratulate me. You would have seen a ceremony, simple it is true, but made admirable by the brotherhood which surrounded us. The next day we set out for Viterbo, a town in the States of the Church, about fifteen leagues from Rome. There are two convents of our order there; one called *Gradi*, where St. Dominic himself dwelt; the other called *la Quercia*, that is *la Chesnaie*. It got its name from an oak-forest, in which one of the trees became sacred on account of a statue of the Blessed Virgin found in

olden times among its boughs by an inhabitant of Viterbo.

This man built on the spot a magnificent convent and a church, into the high altar of which is built the trunk of the oak tree with the statue of the Blessed Virgin. Here it is that I am going to pass a year with my dear companions, who are now my brothers. It was thought the air of the place would agree with us better, and that we should be much more retired than at Rome, which is always crowded with strangers. The site is a marvellous one; we are quite happy here, and are already used to our new manner of living, which is nothing particularly dreadful. In 1836 I passed through Viterbo, and on entering by the Tuscan gate, I descried on my left the door and belfry of La Quercia. I did not know its name, but it struck me. I am now living there: it was destined to be my home contrary to all human prevision. Thus the future is completely hidden from us, and we unconsciously walk over the spot which will one day shelter us.

Your future too, my dear friend, is hidden from me, but if my tears and my prayers be of any avail, the light which once shone upon you, will again dawn. Do not give way to discouragement! Truth is ever able to win us over, however great the distance at

which our mind may keep it. Perhaps, if I am to suffer much upon this earth, you are given me for one of those moments when man imagines that there is no more joy for him here below, and when God grants him such a depth of it, that he believes he never before knew what it was. Consequently I hope one day to find you a believer once more, and to clasp you to my bosom with the twofold tenderness of a friend and a monk. Whilst awaiting this immense joy, I continue to bear you about in my heart like a wounded and loving child, like the latest fruit of my love on earth. I am now too old, in years if not in heart, to move younger hearts. For the future I shall have to look back. I leave you on the threshold of the past : you will be the first to meet my backward gaze. Do not forget me in that beloved place ! When sad and dissatisfied with the world, cast a look from afar towards the window of my cell : think of a friend who loved you so tenderly. Adieu !

XII.

Signs of the Times. The Writer's Task.
The Rule of St. Dominic.

LA QUERCIA, Oct. 2, 1839.

VERY DEAR SIR,

MY first thought is to congratulate you upon the position which your merit has achieved for one well qualified for it.

I am really happy to hear you are at Lyons, near your mother and your friends, one of a church which has maintained inviolate the grandeur of its faith. What you tell me of the change in the views of the clergy, and of many men who had helped to put them into a false position, seems to me to fall in with the general movement everywhere visible. What do you think of the Archbishop of Toulouse asking the Duke of Orleans to his face for the liberty of teaching *promised by our fundamental institutions*? The Archbishop of Toulouse! The mover of the censure upon the Abbé de la Mennais and his friends! One may exclaim with Joad: —

“ Was ever time in wonders richer ! ”

We shall see many more yet. There is Don Carlos

driven out of Spain, and the revolution mistress of the country, until the breath of the Lord shall pass over Spain as it did over France. The revolution will go the round of the world, as Mirabeau said; but with the Catholic Church in its wake.

You must know, my dear friend, that in a book printed at the beginning of the seventeenth century, touching the life of a certain Marina d'Escobar, it is said she had a vision in which she *saw England* returning to the faith, and Spain falling away from it. The same saint prophesied that one day the two orders of St. Dominic and St. Ignatius would be thoroughly reconciled and united.

I saw in the Univers that your book was being reprinted; I am very glad of this. You must not lay aside the pen. Writing is undoubtedly a hard task: but the press has become too powerful to allow you to quit your post. Let us write not for glory, not for immortality; but for Jesus Christ. Let us sacrifice ourselves to our pen. Even supposing nobody were to read us a hundred years hence, what matter? The drop of water is swallowed up by the sea, it is true; but still it has gone to make up the river, and the river does n't die. The man of his own time, says Schiller, is the man of all times. He has done his work: he has had a share in the creation

of things which last. How many books, to-day lost in our libraries, contributed, three hundred years ago, to bring about the revolution which is before our eyes!

Our ancestors are unknown even to us, and still we owe our life to them. Besides none of your writings are of a nature to discourage you. Your style is nervous, brilliant, and is backed by sound learning. Let me engage you to work hard: if I had the direction of your conscience I would oblige you to do so.

The end of your letter where you speak to me of your continual desire to consecrate yourself to God touched me very much. I should be delighted to see you one day among us. I cannot exactly say where you could find our rules. I fancy a Paris bookseller would easily be able to get them for you. In any case you would have some trouble in making out the mechanism of our order. The end of it is *preaching* and *divine learning*. The means are *prayer*, *the mortification of the senses*, and *study*. Our prayer consists of psalmody, or rather the recitation of the Canonical Office, which takes up about two hours and a half every day. We sing only Complin, except on great feasts, when we sing Tierce and Vespers as well. Our mortification consists in perpetual abstinence

from flesh-meat, and fasting *every Friday*, and from the 14th of September until Easter. But this mortification being only a means of attaining an end, may in case of need be dispensed with by the superior. The same may be said of our flannel shirt if it becomes a torment. We have no extraordinary penances, and none are practised except in the measure of our wants, and by the advice of our director.

We have eight or nine hours' study daily; and in certain circumstances exemption from attendance in choir is granted; this increases the time for study. The regular novices, that is those who enter the order at eighteen or twenty years, have ten years' study, are lodged apart, and are allowed the liberty of the Fathers only on receiving the priesthood, even supposing them to have finished their studies. As to the government, it is elective, and admirable in point of liberty. Faults against the rule involve no sin, except they be in *contempt of the rule*, or, what is very unusual, there be a precept in *virtute sanctæ obedientiæ*. Faults are punished by prostrations; formerly, when grave, they might be punished by the discipline given upon the shoulders in full chapter.

The decline of monastic spirit has almost done away with this custom. These few words, my dear friend, will give you as clear an idea of our life as any

one can have who has not practised it. As soon as we have a noviciate a week spent among us will teach you more than ten volumes would. For my part I am very happy under it: the only thing I regret is the absence of a *sap* and severity which we French require. When we become monks, we really mean it. Here our life is grave, spiritual, even mortified, useful: one feels in a *calm* country, or one that is at least apparently so.*



XIII.

The Dignity of the Christian.

NANCY, Jan. 20, 1843.

I AM thankful to you, my dear friend, for your kind remembrance of me, and for all the good and kind things you write to me. I am very well pleased at your having taken so kindly to study and reflection: God has gifted you largely, you must become a useful servant in His hands. If he really

* Since this letter was written, numerous reforms in the matter of *sap* and severity have been introduced into the Dominican observances by Father Lacordaire, and Father Jaudel, one of his first companions, now General of the Order of Friars Preachers.

calls you to a harder and more perfect life than that of the world, He will signify it to you: you have only to ask Him earnestly, and take care never to do anything calculated to deprive you of His light or weaken it.

In any case you can no longer lead a cowardly and indifferent life, with just sufficient faith to fear hell: to-day faith cannot exist without begetting an insight into the high dignity of the Christian and his sublime mission. Each one of us must be willing to do his share towards the salvation of the world, towards the restoration of the Church in our country, and to the salvation of our unsettled land, which seems to be regaining its first position.

I am very happy here, my dear friend. I have been very kindly received, people come to listen to the word of God: we are doing some little good, pray that it may spread and gain strength. Adieu, my dear friend; may God watch over you: give me always a share in your love.

XIV.

To a Young Man on the Death of his Father.

LYONS, *March 4, 1845.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I THANK you for having written to me to tell me the grief which has come upon you. God has called to Himself the man to whom you owe the present life, and the germ of the life to come: this is a great loss, one that leaves a great void! Fortunately you had the consolation of seeing your father die in the sentiments and the practices of the faith; this is the greatest consolation he could give you, since he has thus laid the foundation, and given you the assurance of your future union, if you be yourself faithful to the example he has given you.

The place you are now obliged, by the death of your father, to take, is your second title to manhood, to which your age had already given you one. You have to support and console your mother, and one day give her the joy of having brought up servants for God during eternity.

Pray present my respectful regards to your mother, my love to your brother, and accept yourself the expression of my highest and kindest regard.

XV.

Prayer. — Penance. — The Reading of the Scriptures.

PARIS, *Nov.* 7, 1849.

YOUR letter, my dear friend, shows me that you have already made some way at least in candor and simplicity with me. A long and continuous watchfulness over yourself, prayer, reading, meditation, the sacraments, and works of penance and charity, will alone enable to root out what is bad in you, and above all your pride. Thus, for instance, you ought to be very watchful over yourself in recreation in order to see whether it is the desire of giving others pleasure or that of shining which actuates you.

Kind-heartedness in one's dealings with others is the great charm of life. A mind attentive to the wants of others, which avoids everything calculated to give them pain, which is generous, which does not keep silence out of touchiness or pride, that mind is the mind of a Christian, and is the joy of every one who comes in contact with it. If you succeed in

winning love, you will have done enough, for virtue is the only way to that end.

With regard to your meditation, I think the best thing you could do would be to listen attentively to what is read to you, and to look out in it for something upon which your mind can rest. The contemplation of truth, the application of it to one's self, and an endeavor to practise it, as lovingly as possible, such is real meditation.

Don't let dryness discourage you. Sensible joy is a consolation, but the accomplishment of duty is the real source of all interior progress.

Continued meditation, even indifferently made, produces in the long run an increase of spiritual life: even if it does not produce perfection, it produces at least a habit of the steps to it, namely, reading and reflection. "*Attende lectioni*," says St. Paul.

Don't attempt any practices of penance which might be seen by others: not that we ought to be afraid of being taken for penitents, but because nothing extraordinary ought to be done before every one; and also because we must not lay ourselves open to be thought holier than we really are. You can very easily practise certain outward penances which others cannot detect: for instance, some slight mortifications in your meals, prostrations in your room, and other things of the same sort.

During your recreations associate with those who are least agreeable to you: humbly beg pardon of those whom you have offended; offer up your body interiorly to God to be humbled and chastised according to His good pleasure: think of the passion of our Lord, reflect upon those parts of it for which you feel the greatest repugnance; do this particularly on Fridays.

It is the meditation of our Lord's sufferings which has made all the saints: it is this which corrects in us pride, impurity, and all vices of what nature soever. If you meet some good young man towards whom you feel yourself drawn, ask him to point out to you your faults and defects; but be careful not to form connections of which the heart alone and not God is the groundwork, for it is difficult for the flesh not to be the base of them.

Read daily with attention two chapters of the Holy Scriptures, one of the Old Testament, beginning with the first chapter of Genesis; the other of the New Testament, beginning with the first chapter of St. Matthew.

Go down on your knees for a moment in order to prepare yourself for this reading, and kiss your Bible affectionately on beginning and ending. You must get to esteem above everything else every word of

that book, and to esteem other books only in so far as they approach it. After having thus read the whole Bible, you would do well to confine yourself to the Psalms in the Old Testament, and to the Epistles of St. Paul in the New. If you could learn those two parts by heart, it would be of great advantage to your soul.

I should not advise you to widen the circle of your philosophical studies, but, on the contrary, to narrow and concentrate them. Concentration is the prime and sole element of strength. Learn to sound thoroughly a few lines even of an indifferent author, at a time. Nothing can be turned to account except what has been ripened by meditation. A large range of reading dazzles the mind, and may, in the case of him who has a good memory, dazzle others, but it gives neither solidity nor depth. Depth always supposes extent, but extent does not involve depth. You may take as a penance, for the faults of which you speak, a prostration of ten minutes in your room.

I recommend myself to your prayers, and embrace you tenderly in our Lord.

XVI.

The Age of Preparation.

PARIS, *March 25, 1850.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE left your kind letter long unanswered. My numerous occupations during Lent are the reason of this. But I am desirous of not seeing Lent close without giving you some signs of life and a word of encouragement.

It seems to me that you are giving yourself too much trouble about the question of your vocation, and that you are looking for somewhat too mathematical proofs of it. This is not the rule in the things of God. God unfolds Himself slowly, by repeated impressions which finally produce powerful ones in the soul, and leave no doubt about His will. You are young, as yet unformed. Consequently it is quite natural you should experience a certain instability, especially when you look forward to the long series of years you have still to wait before arriving at the priesthood. You must let days take their course. "*Sufficit diei malitia sua.*" Years glide by quickly when left to themselves. Besides, you must learn and lay in your stock for the rest of your life. I have

always regretted not having had ten years sound theological study before entering upon active life. This all-absorbing life leaves you no time to repair the want of solidity of the foundations ; it hurries you on without your being able to halt a single instant in order to do something in the way of fresh study. You have scarcely time to read a paper, and an odd book of mark. Take advantage, then, of the interval which separates you from the world and from active life, by diving deep into the fountain-head of divine science. The waters appear at first chilly and bitter ; a day will come when you will look upon them as the most invigorating and sweetest of drinks.

During Holy Week, from Monday morning until Saturday evening, give your time to meditating on the Passion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Try to picture it to yourself in its minutest details. Make a constant application of it to yourself personally, and offer without ceasing your body to God, to suffer all that Jesus Christ has suffered. The saints say that nothing is more agreeable to God, and better calculated to form within us the spirit of faith and charity. Make out some little privations and penances for yourself, according to the measure of your strength. Sacrifice is very easy when we are with others, so many opportunities of repressing our incli-

nations offer ! The spiritual rod is always within our reach, and if we cannot chastise our body as it deserves, it is very easy for us to chastise our soul.

Adieu, pray for me. I embrace you as my child in Jesus Christ.



XVII.

Prayer and Reading.

PARIS, *June* 10, 1850.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE been in Paris for the last few days, and I return to-morrow to Flavigny, where I received your letter. It gave me real pleasure, because it showed me you were advancing in virtue. As charity is the most excellent of all virtues, your looking after that sick young man, and tending him as you would our Lord, is a really good work. As to doing more, I do not think it advisable. He would probably not understand such acts of piety, and they are consequently better left alone.

You must not be astonished at the difficulty you find in mental prayer.

The best thing you could do would be to read attentively every evening one or two verses of the Gos-

pel, or of the Epistles of St. Paul, and fix your mind upon them on the morrow, producing such acts of love, faith, and compunction, as you might be able, and then to make every evening some good resolution, no matter how trifling. Lastly, you must beg of God unceasingly the grace to pray well.

I am grieved that your studies are not well managed. By reading thus incoherently, without aim and without order, you are losing valuable time, and what is more, you are getting yourself out of the way of real work, which is a great misfortune for the mind. Since the study of philosophy, as taught to you, is insufficient to fill up your time, take up the study of Ecclesiastical History or of the Holy Scripture. These are the two indispensable parts of the theologian. Buy a History of the Church, read it, pen in hand, in order to fix on your memory the dates and principal events. You will thereby lay up a treasure which a slight effort will turn to account. But whatever you do, do it continually and perseveringly. I would rather you read nothing than read at hazard.

Adieu, my dear friend, pray for me, and continue to give me an account of your soul. I embrace you tenderly.

XVIII.

Humility.

FLAVIGNY, *July 29, 1850.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE consciousness of all the pride which is within you, and of the pain it gives to others, is a great step forward. There is nothing more hateful nor more hated than pride, when shown exteriorly; hence, modesty is the first element of real politeness. The Christian must, however, aim higher. Even when modesty is genuine, that is, when it is the fruit of a real desire to please others, it is but a veil thrown over pride, in order to spare the sight of it to those with whom we live. The Christian must be humble; and humility does not consist in hiding our talents and virtues, but in the clear knowledge of all that is wanting to us, in not being elated by what we have, since it is a free gift of God, and even with all His gifts, we are still infinitely little. It is a remarkable fact that great virtue necessarily begets humility, and that if great talent does not always produce the same effect, still it softens down a great deal of the unevenness which the pride of second-rate men is

continually throwing into relief. Real excellence and humility are consequently not incompatible one with the other, on the contrary, they are twin sisters. God, who is excellence itself, is without pride. He sees Himself as He is, without however despising what is not Himself; He is Himself naturally and simply, with a leaning for all His creatures, however humble. Goodness and humility are almost one and the same thing.

The kind-hearted feel themselves naturally drawn to give themselves, to sacrifice themselves, to make themselves cheap, and this is humility. Pride is more hated than any other vice, not only because it wounds our self-love, but because it testifies to a want of that goodness without which it is impossible to win love. Be therefore kind-hearted, and you will infallibly become humble. Your eyes, your lips, the lines of your forehead, all will get quite another look, and you will find that you will be sought after quite as much as you were shunned. But, how become kind-hearted? Alas! first of all, by begging it earnestly and unceasingly of God, and then by endeavoring on every occasion to consult the pleasure of others, and sacrifice our own to them. It is a lengthy apprenticeship, but will carries a man through everything.

XIX.

On Education.—Advice to a Young Tutor.

PARIS, *December* 10, 1850.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR fears with regard to the task God has intrusted to you, do not astonish me. This task is a great one. Nothing is more difficult than the education of a child, and I am not sure whether in ordinary circumstances success is possible, so numerous are the obstacles to be met with in all that surround, in his family, the best natured and best disposed child. You might read in the works of Fenelon what relates to the education of the Duke of Burgundy. Your pupil is not a prince, but he is a man, and the difference between the two is not great.

You will readily understand that I cannot give you a treatise on the matter; and even supposing I had time and space, still I am without experience, which is in this, more so than in other matters, the great master. I have never had the education of any one, and I do not think I was myself educated, although I had the best and most perfect of mothers. Her position obliged her to send me to college at the

age of ten years, and goodness knows that in that college there was not the shadow of education, except military discipline and the fisty-cuffing of the boys, within their four walls. Religion, morals, politeness, all disappeared gradually, and all the good that remained in us came doubtless from the impressions we retained of our childhood.

I had, it is true, from my eleventh until my fifteenth year, a master who took great interest in me, and who did me every kind of good office, but much more in a literary way than in any other. He won my confidence and affection, whilst my other masters inspired me with nothing but indifference, dashed with almost perpetual mutiny. You may see that such a course was not calculated to give any very great knowledge in the matter of education.*

I think the chief point is to love one's pupil: to love him in God, not with a soft and carnal, but with a sincere affection, which does not exclude firmness. The child must fear, above all, giving pain to his master, and learn to look for his reward in the satisfaction he gives him. This will be effected by the pupil's loving his master, loving him sincerely, and

* The great talent displayed by Father Lacordaire, later on, in the conduct of the great schools he took in hand, especially those of Soreze, is known to everybody.—*Editor's Note.*

it is difficult to produce this feeling in a soul which knows nothing of life, which sees itself cared for and caressed by everybody, and naturally looks upon its parents and masters as the instruments of its pleasures. The large majority of children are brought up in frightful selfishness on account of the very affection shown them: a disorderly affection which becomes their slave, and flatters in them the dreadful inclination of taking everything to themselves, without ever making any spontaneous return for the sake of giving pleasure to others. How is this rock to be avoided? How win love without developing the selfishness of the child, instead of the cordial return? At college, notwithstanding the drawbacks of public education, there is at least the advantage of having rivals, adversaries, enemies: of having truths told and slaps given, which is an admirable way of learning how little we are, and gives us a proper notion of the value of that gratuitous friendship which some of our school-fellows show us. In the midst of one's family this painful initiation is altogether wanting. The child has neither rivals nor enemies; nobody tells him hard truths; he is unacquainted with pain for want of an occasional blow from an ill-disposed hand. He is a kind of mummy swathed in silk, and ends by believing himself to be a little god.

The child then must be punished when he does wrong — he must have privations imposed upon him — his faults must be plainly laid open to him; in case of need, a cold and severe countenance must be shown him; he must be exposed to slight trials to open out his sensibility, and to tiny perils in order to give him an idea of what it is to have a little courage; he must be made to ask pardon even of servants when he has offended them; he must from time to time be condemned to rough work, in order to prevent him from despising inferior occupations. There are a thousand other details into which one might enter. Every opportunity must be seized of kindling in his soul the fire of sacrifice, without which every man, whatever his rank, is contemptible.

As for religion, care must be taken not to present it to him as simple devotion made up of pious and soothing ceremonies. This kind of religion is but a shadow which vanishes at the first onset of the passions. Solid instruction, containing sacred history, dogma and moral, is the foundation of the whole religious edifice.

A moderate amount of prayer, a little pious reading every day, the love of the poor, an occasional confession, and a communion, if possible, as frequent as his confession, the love of Jesus Christ growing

out of the knowledge of his life and death, an occasional slight mortification, and a few acts of external humility ; such appears to me to be a method calculated to ensure sound and lasting results. But everything depends upon the master, and almost upon every moment. A single impression is enough to inflict upon the soul an irreparable wound, or so to confirm it in the right way that it will never leave it without remorse.



XX.

Upon the Conversion of a Soul from Protestantism to Catholicism.

NANCY, *August 14, 1863.*

I PERCEIVE with great joy that God continues to support and enlighten you in the important work you have taken in hand. You have entered upon a period of your life upon which your eternity depends, whether you yield to the grace of God which urges you, or resist it. Your mind once made up, God will not abandon you, if you choose Him ; and if you do not submit, He will probably never knock so loudly at your soul again. It was for those chiefly in your position that Jesus Christ pronounced the

words which He addressed to Jerusalem. "If thou didst but know, and that in this thy day, the things that are for thy peace, but now they are hidden from thee. For the day shall come when thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and beat thee flat to the ground, and shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation."

God has long been paving the way for your return to truth. He has given you pious friends, capable of touching you by word and example; He has torn down from your heart the veil woven by pride, which usually blinds heretics, and makes them more rebellious against Divine light than even barbarians or idolaters, because they think they know, and their personal acquirements revolt against knowledge which must be taken in with the simplicity of a child, according to the saying of our Lord, "Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." You are no longer affected by this heretical pride, if ever you were; you see your ignorance, your weakness, and the illusions of science itself; you feel the want of an authority to teach you with certitude revealed laws and dogmas, and to lead you, in the peace of present, to the peace of future unity.

You clearly see that in outside authority there is nothing but doubt and variation, and that even when the separated sects proclaim your individual liberty, they exercise an act of authority in your regard, adding contradiction to rebellion, asking you to refuse obedience to the universal Church, in order to show it to a particular one. These things are as clear as the day-light, and still they can be seen by no one unless his eyes are opened by grace. Yours are!

The only thing you want is perseverance in inquiring into the Catholic faith, and the courage to renounce humbly your past errors.

I feel persuaded you will do so, and that you will thus happily reach the goal where God awaits you. Pray to Him unceasingly to hasten this hour, to sever your last bonds, and to make you a living member of the city of the saints and angels.

Nothing could give me more joy than to hear of your final triumph; I shall have done but very little towards it: but everything done in Jesus Christ is common to us all, and we rejoice at it as at a thing which touches us personally.

XXI.

Love and Deception.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

GOD has given you a weighty share of the trials of this life; He has stricken you as though wilfully, less like a child one chastises than as a victim one immolates, and still you do not seem to see the bent He has given you for Himself. If He wishes to possess your whole soul, can we be surprised that He deprives it of everything capable of leading it astray? The Gospel tells us He is a kind God. Those caresses of which you dream, that sweet and lawful love which would overflow like a balm from your stricken heart; those ineffable delights of pure affection of which men are allowed to get a snatch; why should not your Lord be afraid that these things would prevent you from loving Him alone? "*We have been crushed, in order to our fusion,*" said M. de Maistre, of the peoples of Europe. When God crushes us under the rod, is it not with a view that our blood may mingle with His, with His shed long ago under harder and more humiliating strokes? Is it not that we may seek no other face than the

bleeding face of our Saviour, no other eyes than His, no other lips than His, no other shoulders than His shoulders torn by the scourge, no other hands and feet to kiss than His hands and feet pierced with nails for love of us, no other wounds to tend with gentleness than His divine and ever bleeding wounds? Ah! my friend, is not love ever love? You complain that you are not loved, and God has given you in the bottom of your heart a chaste, immense, invincible love. You would fain harbor another profane love, and God, who perhaps does not will it, strikes and wounds you; He shows you the infinite, the vanity of the world; He crucifies you in order to get you to love His crucified Son more, and realize that crucifixion in yourself. You will probably get my letter in solitude, in a place where there are others too who could have loved the creature with rapture, and they have sacrificed it to God. I do not know His special designs in your regard, but I know that His design upon all men is to be loved by them, and that the whole conduct of His providence is directed to this end.

XXII.

Upon the Union of Catholics for the Defence
of Religious Liberty.NANCY, *June 16, 1844.*

SIR,

I WAS just leaving Grenoble, when your letter, informing me of your approaching marriage, was handed to me. This circumstance has delayed my answer to your kind and friendly communication.

It was with unfeigned pleasure, Sir, that I learned from yourself the event which will give your life a fixed centre, and put you in the way of doing all the good you have in view. Neither means nor opportunity will fail you, for the farther we go the more intense becomes the struggle between the good and the bad; and very soon the only question in Europe will be the religious one flanked by that of true freedom. The sudden and unexpected union which has taken place between the Catholics of France is a novel and almost unheard of phenomenon, unexampled since the time of the league. A very short time ago we were Gallicans, and Ultramontanes, Cartesians and Lamennesians, Legitimists and Juste-miliens,

friends and enemies of the principle of liberty: to-day these very grave differences seem to have died out: the common danger has rallied every one, and I am constantly coming upon the proof of that divine instinct which draws us all together. A week ago I was preaching in the cathedral of Langres, at the request of the bishop, hitherto very hostile to me; and there was no possible kind of good grace which he did not bring to our reconciliation, even to complimenting me, at the end of the sermon, before the whole audience. Let us thank God for this change, and let us pray for its continuance; had it not been for the quarrels of Gallicanism, the eighteenth century would not have had such an easy triumph!



XXIII.

A Specimen of Monastic Inveigling.

NANCY, *October 3, 1846.*

I WILL tell you straightforwardly, my dear friend, my views with regard to the circumstances which again change your position. Your quitting the world and refusing the advantages offered to you, cannot, it seems to me, be seriously contemplated by you. Your

duties to your family, and your debt towards your friend, are sacred bonds. God seems to take a pleasure in thwarting all your plans, and in keeping you in the world. Even supposing you do not see His object in this, it would be difficult not to recognize in all these accidents a mark of His will, to which you must submit. You will perhaps serve Him better in the world than you would have done under the monk's frock. It seems to me clear that you ought to accept the brilliant offers that are made to you, and think seriously of making your way in the world, without troubling yourself any further about a plan in the way of which Providence throws so many obstacles.

I again offer you, my dear friend, the expression of my affection, and of the esteem in which I hold you, on account of your clinging to a project so frequently thwarted, and which has just fallen to the ground, notwithstanding our mutual desires. I trust you will not forget us, and for my part, I shall be delighted whenever I can see you. Adieu, then, and let me see you soon.

XXIV.

Obstacles in the Way of a Vocation.
Patience and Peace.CHALAIS, *July 16, 1847.*

YOU know, my dear child, the interest I take in the state of your soul, and in the desire you are cherishing. If I had been in any way able to help you through the difficulty, I should have done so long ago. But God evidently kept us both fast, and we must submit to His holy will until the end. We know neither His reasons nor His day; we simply know that He loves us, and does everything for the sake of His elect. Yesterday I got a letter from a young man who has for years been prevented from entering the Dominican Order: now he is free. Unheard of obstacles have been surmounted by him.

The same will be your case, my dear child, in God's own time. "*Nescis, modo, scies autem postea.*" Live calm in hope, remembering the saying of St. Paul: "Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed," Alas! I would give a great deal to

be able to free you, but I cannot. This afflicts me greatly.

Do your daily work. "*Sufficit diei malitia sua*," said our Lord. What a beautiful and touching saying! How well suited to our misery! Don't let us trouble about the future: let us simply bear our burden each day. I too used to be hot and impatient: to-day I am no longer so: I await peacefully the will of my Lord, and I have always found it to be good and amiable whenever I have been able to get at the secret of it.

You ask me for a book that would be serviceable to you. I think that the *Guide of Louis of Granada*, a celebrated work of one of our fathers, would do you good. Read it slowly so as to derive a benefit from it. See in this light what you want, and endeavor to acquire it. When a man knows how really to read, few books are sufficient.

I embrace you, my dear child, with all my heart.

XXV.

Mortification and Prayer.

PARIS, *Aug. 31, 1850.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I AM very well satisfied with your account of yourself, with your practices and your good resolutions. I am afraid, however, that you are carrying fasting too far. Fasting is sometimes borne for some years, and ends by gradually breaking down the health. One o'clock in the afternoon seems to me a rather late hour for breakfast. But if you do not carry them to excess, you are quite right in giving yourself up to mortification and prayer: they are the two great sources of the spiritual life, and each strengthens the other. That in which many persons consecrated to God fall short, is, as you say, mortification. They live without bringing under the body, and the soul gets drowsy, even when it is not the slave of the lower appetites. With regard to prayer, I should like you to recite the Psalter once a week, dividing it into seven parts, or at least once every fortnight, which would make ten Psalms a day. This was a very celebrated practice in the middle

ages, a very improving one, and it is a great pity that the faithful have given it up for prayers which are very frequently neither forcible nor of any standing.



XXVI.

Upon Gratitude for Good Done in the Spiritual
Order.

PARIS, *Dec.* 11, 1850.

SIR,

THE sentiments conveyed in your letter are a matter of great consolation to me. For we can have no higher lot than to be the instruments of God's grace in souls. You are good enough to tell me that my conferences helped to bring back your soul into the path of truth, and that you still find them a source of good and pious desires. I rejoice at it, although God is everything, and His ministers are simply docile instruments in His hands, following the impulse He gives them. I rejoice at it, for your sake and my own: for yours, since you gain strength by reading those conferences; for myself, because you return me in exchange the help of your gratitude before God. God has constantly protected

me. I attribute His blessing to the prayers of those who, like you, Sir, pray to Him in my behalf. Let me beg of you to continue so to do, and be sure that you will thus repay me a hundred-fold the little good I have done you.

Pray receive, Sir, together with my thanks, the cordial expression of my high consideration.



XXVII.

Same Subject.

I HAVE felt a real joy, Sir, in what you tell me of the good I formerly did you. Those times are daily receding from me: the generation to which I announced the word of God is beginning to advance in life, and very soon it will be only in heaven, please God, that will live the memory of those meetings which you assiduously attended. Be kind enough, then, to pray for him who now and again found the way to your soul.

XXVIII.

Obedience and Liberty.—Advice touching Education.

PARIS, *January 21, 1851.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I DO not think you ought to condemn your pupil to depend absolutely on the will of others, and to deprive him of all liberty of choice. We must avoid equally nurturing in a young soul the spirit of slavery and the spirit of independence, because both are contrary to the real state of the Christian as depicted in the Gospel. A child who never deliberates, never chooses ; who is passive in all he does, will never be good for anything but to submit cravenly to men and things set over him by chance : in like manner the child who is reared in independence will not submit where obedience is necessary, nor support with rational honor the pain of lawful obedience. These difficulties, by the way, abound in everything ; man is constantly placed between two extremes. The ancients used to say : “*In medio stat virtus.*” Virtue has not shifted her quarters since then ; she is still where Aristotle found her.

But now the question is how to bring a child up to the use of liberty without making him master; how to make him obedient without his being craven? This is undoubtedly a delicate task. I have heard that the children educated by the persons of whom you speak are generally unenterprising, wanting in decision and boldness, and that they require to be constantly held in leading-strings. I cannot say whether this is true or not, since I have never had an opportunity of verifying the fact. Were this the case, their education would fail in an essential point, and this result would doubtless be attributable to their constantly passive state. A child must neither command nor obey at every turn, like spoilt children; but he is not therefore to be kept under like a slave, nor to be afraid of having an idea of his own.



XXIX.

Pious Reading.—Works of Penance.

PARIS, *March 3, 1851.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

IT is a pleasure to me to see how kindly you have taken to the task intrusted to you by God, although you did not feel any natural liking for it, inasmuch

as it is a work which necessitated a good deal of self-sacrifice, and put you in a kind of domesticity. Faith has given you another view of it: you have attached yourself to that child as to a soul which came from God, baptized in the blood of our Lord, and in which you could complete the work of mercy begun by its birth and baptism. It has turned out that the acceptance of duty has been rewarded by those secret joys of the heart, by that unction usually given by God to those who serve Him in simplicity and humility, without looking to the littleness or the greatness of positions, a greatness illusory when borrowed from the world, and not from heaven. You may turn your position to admirable account in acquiring all Christian virtues. You have already made real way, although there remain in you the roots of the old nature; viz., of pride, clinging to your own views, and a worldly spirit. But you are getting on. Do not get frightened at your powerlessness in meditation. Take a book: the Imitation of Jesus Christ; the Gospel; or the Epistles of St. Paul: read a few verses, endeavor to enter into the spirit of them: throw yourself at the feet of our Lord as though he were present: kiss them with tenderness and humility, and ask Him to grant you to find pleasure in His word only, and in that of His saints.

You used to be very fond of worldly books, your affection must now be set upon the works of those who have followed our Lord and the Church. The others are almost all infected with ignorance, pride, empty systems, and are covertly, when not overtly hostile to truth. We always lose more than we gain by them, and we must only take them up when necessary, when we stand in absolute need of them in order to find out things we are bound to know. Besides, books are so numerous that we cannot even read all those which are excellent: why lose our time in perusing those which are spoilt by a warped judgment?

With regard to penance, your state of health will allow of nothing very considerable. But there are privations which, amid the abundance in which you live, may pass off unnoticed, and acts of humility which do good to the soul without injuring the body. Practise largely this sort of mortification. It gently introduces into our hearts a seed which grows like the mustard-seed. A short time ago I came upon one of Fenelon's letters in which he advises a great courtier, the Duke de Chevreux, to prostrate himself betimes in the secrecy of his cabinet. And still nothing gives us to understand that Fenelon had a particular taste for external acts of penance: he is constantly falling back upon the pure and disinterested love of God,

and he is quite right. But the only road to this love is the one marked out by our Lord in His passion from the Garden of Olives to the Pretorium, and thence to Calvary.

It was Love which traced out this road, and Love probably knew the path which leads to Himself.



XXX.

Female Society.

PARIS, *June* 12, 1851.

TOUCHING your relations with the persons of whom you speak, I have nothing to say except that you should be extremely prudent, but without any affectation. Wherever there are women there are perils for the heart. Avoid everything which you could not do and say before witnesses: this is the great rule, and by it duty and peace are alike safeguarded. Avoid as far as possible conversations at which the whole family is not present: when they are all together, one is always safe. I am well aware that in your case nothing grave is to be feared, since you are in a house where all is honor and edification; but sometimes security itself is a peril, because the very

innocence of all that surrounds us makes us less watchful over our hearts. I easily understand, my dear friend, the difficulty you find in prayer, and in your relations with God. A happy and comfortable life readily produces this listlessness of soul. We enjoy ourselves innocently, and yet little by little the spring gets weak, prayer becomes irksome, mortification is lost sight of, we get into a negative state with regard to God, which deprives us of the joys of conscious love. The only cure I can see for this is to give God certain regular moments daily, to bind one's self down to certain exterior acts, which may withdraw us, from time to time, from our insensibility. If meditation is hard, spiritual reading might be useful to you. In short, my dear friend, whatever you do, let it be done earnestly and perseveringly.

XXXI.

The Wings of Rest.—The Weakness of the Heart.

PARIS, *July 22*, 1851.

I AM hesitating whether or not to write to you this evening. I have but half an hour to give you, and I should like to give you more: but I prefer sending

you a line a day earlier to enjoying the pleasure of writing to you quietly and at my leisure. There you are then, far from us, in a charming solitude, like a spoilt child of our good Father, whilst we are staying here in the heat and monotony of Paris. Just at your age, I was starting for Switzerland, with my knapsack upon my back ; and I thought myself the happiest of mortals. Since that time I have travelled a great deal, and the want of it does not now affect me. I have bid farewell to mountains, valleys, rivers, unknown shades, in order to form in my room, between God and my soul, an horizon vaster than the world. Thus, however distant, you are still near me ; in my happy moments, you form a special ornament of the place in which I have collected together all I love, and in vain you climb your mountains to escape me : escape is difficult from those to whom God has given the wings of rest. You will perhaps ask me what this is, but you have too much imagination not to know, and these wings have, I hope, already borne you aloft a little !

I am thankful to you for all the details you give me touching the good and bad side of your life. You can lay yourself open by letter as well as in conversation, and this is a happy gift. I cannot get rid of my astonishment at the hold external beauty takes upon

you, and of your powerlessness to shut your eyes. And yet it is so small a thing for a soul which has but once seen and felt God! I cordially pity your weakness, and wonder at it as a great phenomenon to which I have not the key. Never since I have known Jesus Christ, has anything appeared to me beautiful enough to look upon it with concupiscence, and especially with a concupiscence like yours, so deep, so thorough, and so contented. Fortunately God has given you as a counterpoise a great faith, and a love which is beginning to become tender. You know you promised me to go to confession every week, and to communion every week too, provided your confessor allows you. This is a *pacta conventa*, and you would be a traitor not to keep to it. In the spiritual, as in human life, perseverance is everything. If you return to irregular and aimless habits, you will infallibly lose all the way you have made.

Adieu, my dear child, my half-hour is up. I have still three little hours * to say, then to go to choir, then I have vespers, then supper, then recreation, and then sleep. I embrace you, then, begging you to remember that I love you sincerely and deeply, as my son.

* A portion of the Roman Breviary, so called because said at different hours of the day. — *Translator's Note.*

XXXII.

The Confidential Communications of a Friend.

PARIS, *August 2, 1851.*

I AM really grieved, my dear friend, at having given you pain by a remark in my last letter, in which I believe I told you I did not understand your fickleness in good and evil. Alas! I was wrong: everything in the passions of man is comprehensible. God has given you an ardent and generous nature, the grace of a firm faith, and admirable appreciation of all the beauties of the Christian life. But your senses, as yet imperfectly subdued, are waging a terrible war with you. What more simple? You have already made great strides in virtue, and you will make still greater; for God loves you and you love Him. Never tire of struggling and hoping! The calmer days you have enjoyed since your seclusion have given me real joy. I can fancy I am there with you. I climb your mountains, stroll along your valleys, sit down with you under a tree, at the foot of a rock, and we talk in peace of the beautiful things of God. They are the only ones to which we must

cling ; fortunately you are one of them, and I thank God for it with all my heart.

Since the twentieth of July I have had rather sad times. A sore throat, accompanied with a slight fever, came upon me two days before a sermon I was to preach in the church of St. Thomas d'Aquin. Three or four days afterwards the fever disappeared ; but I still had a heaviness in my head, a quantity of blood in the throat and nostrils, and all this accompanied by a general prostration and a kind of incapacity for work.

As I am not accustomed to sickness, this indisposition brought on a fit of melancholy. And all kinds of painful thoughts came into my mind, and betimes I experienced a distaste for life, such as I had never known before. It seemed to me as though I had nothing more to do here below, and as though God was warning me to get ready for my departure. This morning, whilst writing to you, I have recovered my ordinary state ; is it you who revive me, or the acornite which my doctor has just made me take after the homœopathic fashion ?

I really think it must be you, and also the feast of St. Dominic, which is at hand. We shall celebrate it the day after to-morrow. The archbishop is coming to say mass in our church ; he will then assist at

high mass, and afterwards breakfast with us and about twenty of our friends. We shall be still more numerous at Flavigny. His Lordship the Bishop of Dijon has promised to officiate, and besides those we have invited, the railway will, as usual, bring us a great many casual visitors.

You are aware that you have got to pass a few days at Flavigny this autumn, and if you spend the winter in Italy it will be on your road. I should like too to show you Chalais; Chalais means the Alps, pines, torrents, immense views, something quite worthy of an imagination like yours, a place you would like for its own sake, and which you would not forget.

I am deeply touched, my dear little child, at what you tell me of your attachment for the poor old monk. I should talk to you much more tenderly were I not past the age when the heart pours itself out with restraint. Despite myself, I weigh what I say in order not to appear too simple and too loving. In heaven alone affections will no longer know the difference of age; there we shall have all eternity before us without restraint. Here below, twenty or five-and-twenty years' difference is a great deal. I may, it is true, call myself your father, and in that capacity press you tenderly to my heart.

Tell me when you are coming back, if soon, and

by what road. Take great care of yourself, sleep, eat, drink, rest yourself, and walk moderately. Just bear in mind that you have to lose three years in order to gain a lifetime. Besides, with your projects, what does it matter to you? Make the sacrifice gayly to Esculapius, or Apollo, I don't remember which, but, above all, make the sacrifice to those who love you, myself included, and to God, who is the first and best of your friends.

A thousand kind greetings to your mountains, which are doing you good: to your air, your woods, your streams, and to all that is bringing you round. And as to yourself, my dear child, what can I say to you, if not that you have just given me one of the most delightful mornings I have enjoyed for a long time. Here I am, quite young again, all life, but not so as to allow me to embrace you as I should like, which however I do as well as I can, with the leave of our good God, and your own. Adieu!

XXXIII.

The Duties of the Citizen.

PARIS, *December 11, 1851.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YESTERDAY a letter of yours was shown me which gave me some uneasiness. It did not appear to me sufficiently Christian, sufficiently calm, worthy of the mind God has given you, and of the designs with which He has inspired you for His glory and your own sanctification. Already your only object in this world is to prepare yourself to preach Christianity to it, which, whilst naturalizing justice here below, has also naturalized here gentleness and peace. Let me then beg of you, my little child, to be more staid and cautious in your way of thinking, in order to remain thoroughly master of yourself. It is probable that your life will be passed in the midst of the most various public vicissitudes; you will not be an indifferent spectator, but you will undergo them with courage, acting at every step in the measure of your strength according to duty.

When a good citizen loves God and his country, he does all he can, and attempts nothing more: he is

prudent without cowardice, and as he is disinterested, he is seldom mistaken with regard to his duty.

This, my dear child, is the little scolding I wanted to give you. I say nothing to you of the air and climate you are enjoying, because these things are insignificant when compared with the events which are going forward about us. But I can at all times tell you I love you, because you will always deserve it.



XXXIV.

The Future of France and the Christian Spirit.

PARIS, *January 3, 1852.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR letter of December 26th gave me very great pleasure. I regret that mine, the one I wrote you during late events, gave you some pain. I was naturally uneasy about the ardor of your age and your ideas. As for me, my age and my duty place me beyond the reach of the impetuosity which my affection made me dread in you. Man is doomed to undergo a host of evils. He cannot sacrifice himself usefully at the moment he would be glad to do so; he must abide the hours of Providence, steering

clear of all that could compromise honor and conscience, two goods which must ever remain intact, because they are the property of God. How glad I should have been to have had you by me at this painful time, and to pour out my soul to you! Such was not, however, the will of God. He sent you to a distance, some days previously, as though He wanted to keep you out of danger, and Himself feared the ardor of your youth and sentiments.

These precautions of Providence are not rare in the case of those He loves specially. And who is there who is not so loved? He sees us all as though each of us was alone in the world. This is a miracle of goodness of which we can form but a dim notion, even by studying those minute events which go to make up our interior and exterior life, for God conceals Himself as far as possible; He is afraid we should see too much of Him, and that our liberty should take His loving intervention to ask.

It is upon Him, my dear friend, that we must throw ourselves in presence of the miseries of this world, which become more evident as we advance in life.

The French gentry, seeing the gulf it had created beneath it by its unbelief, and by the contempt of all religious liberty, has recoiled through sheer terror,

and thrown its political creed into the fire; so that one is at a loss to see what it has to-day except the instinct of material safety. God is inflicting just punishment upon it, and He is doubtless punishing it in order to enlighten it. For no country can live without an educated class, especially when that educated class is the only living and powerful nobility which exists within it. The gentry cannot consequently perish: but they must reform, must bid adieu to the deplorable ignorance of the things of God in which they have lived for the last sixty years: must lead the illiterate classes on to truth by the teaching of doctrine backed up by the infinitely more efficacious teaching of example.

Wherefore, my dear friend, thither all our efforts ought to be directed, because this is our only hope. Our country is lost unless it return to religion. We shall doubtless have new efforts, but these efforts will be barren so long as it shall not have opened its eyes to the light which falls, through the Gospel and Jesus Christ, from eternity.

You are called, my child, to do your part in this regeneration, and this thought ought to console you for everything, or at least give you strength to undergo everything. As for myself, I experience indescribable joy at the thought that for twenty-seven

years, since the day of my first consecration to God, I have not uttered a word, nor written a line the object of which was not to communicate to France this spirit of life, and to communicate it in an acceptable form, that is to say, with gentleness, moderation, and patriotism. You will one day do the same. Prepare yourself for it by constant watchfulness over yourself and your passions. If no beautiful day is ever again to dawn upon our country, at least the day of God will dawn upon our soul; upon your soul and mine, which God has united despite disparity of age, because it is a privilege of divine love to ignore time!



XXXV.

Our Sanctification to be wrought out where
we are, and not elsewhere.

GAND, *January 26, 1852.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I AM not of opinion that you ought to quit your present position under pretext of coming and dying at the seminary. Even were your health hopelessly gone, still I should see no motive for this heroism. What good do you expect to do at the

seminary which you could not do where God has put you? Nothing prevents you from loving God, from praying to Him, from serving Him according to your strength, and perhaps at the seminary your union with Him would meet with still greater obstacles. We easily imagine that places give us what we have not got: we cry out for a rule when we have not got one, and when we have one we find it uncomfortable and ineffectual. We are thus the plaything of our imagination. One man fancies that if he were transported to the mountain of Kolsim, in Egypt, in the midst of St. Anthony's desert, he would become a saint; and if perchance God should bring his dream about, he would be unable to live away from men more than a week, perhaps more than a day. Put away then, my dear child, vague prospects and changes. Stay where you are as long as you are wanted, and as long as your health is not sufficiently sound.

I write to you from Gand, a town in Belgium, where we have a house. I came intending to visit our convents in the northern provinces, namely, in Belgium, Holland, England, and Ireland. They are provinces upon which we count for the general restoration of our order, and I thought it very useful to get an accurate knowledge of them, especially as we

are just about holding our first provincial chapter in France.

I shall give no conferences this Lent. Our General was desirous there should be none, on account of the present political state of things, and I was myself of the same way of thinking. My position as the representative and restorer of an order required a prudence of conduct of which I could not lose sight.

Adieu, my dear child, love our good God well, pray for me, and be persuaded that I shall always love you.



XXXVI.

London.—The Multitude of Pious Societies.

HINCKLEY, *March 7, 1852.*

I ANSWER your letter, my dear friend, from Hinckley. It is a little town in Leicestershire, where we have a convent and a few fathers. I got here last night, after spending two days in London without seeing any one, in order to examine at leisure the exterior of the town, which is large and fine in parts, but appears to me inferior to Paris in many respects. Size itself, when it is as it were boundless,

detracts from beauty ; it is then but a heap of houses without end or harmony, in which one detects no order, and when these houses are in a cold right line and all alike, as is the case with London in many quarters, their immensity tires and oppresses, without giving pleasure either to body or mind.

The fine part of London is fortunately confined to a quarter which is vast without being oppressive, and in which the palaces, parks, spacious streets, Westminster Abbey, the Houses of Parliament, and the Thames, produce by their proximity to each other a very admirable effect. It will be a pleasure to me to revisit it on my return.

Nothing, my dear friend, stands in the way of your entering the third order ; it will, I think, be a very good thing, and since the Curé of has faculties for these cases, you will do well to take advantage of the circumstance. As to the expiatory association you speak of, and which has spread rapidly, it is certainly a very pious confraternity, only I am slightly afraid of it. To offer one's self to God, body and soul, in order to expiate the sins of the world, is to expose one's self to great and painful sacrifices, in which we all participate, it is true, a little, but less fully when we do not ask God to give us a greater share than would fall to us by the general laws of

His justice. For my own part, I should be afraid of going too far; my cross already seems to me at times weighty, and God grant I may bear it as He wishes! Still, it is possible, that the very state of your health and the trials of your position, render you desirous of bearing others; reflect upon it before God, for I am disinclined to say either yes or no.

The great number of already existing confraternities need not be a consideration; the world is wide. It suffices for a thing to be good for a certain number of souls in order for them to put it in practice with fruit; we must never forget the beautiful saying of St. Paul, "*Multiformis gratia Dei.*"

God makes Himself all to all; He lends Himself in a certain sort to the caprices of souls, and association in Him, under whatever form, always pleases Him.

I am gratified at the news you give me of the state of your soul. Keep yourself very calm, abandoning yourself entirely to our Lord; He alone knows what we require, He will guide us better than any one else, and especially better than ourselves.

I embrace you right affectionately. Pray for me.

XXXVII.

England and the University of Oxford.

OXFORD, *March 16, 1852.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE on my table your two letters, both of which in turn brought me some consolation on my foreign pilgrimage: I now see that you love me. Never give way to the idea that your letters or your visits are irksome to me, or that you have to consult anything else in them but your heart. You may be sure that mine will respond. I got your letter yesterday, on my return to London, together with a large number of others which had been awaiting me ten days. I spent the last ten days in visiting very beautiful things: first of all, two of our monasteries, one situated at Hinckley, a little town in Leicestershire, the other in Leicester itself; then a mansion in which I received hospitality, the Cistercian convent called Mount St. Bernard, Alton Towers, belonging to Lord Shrewsbury, Cheadle church, a Passionist monastery not far from there, the town of Birmingham, and lastly the Catholic college of St. Mary's,

Oscott. All this, which says but little to you, said much to me, and taught me a great deal touching the marvellous growth of the Catholic Church in England. You can form no idea of the magnificence of these establishments, of the beauty of their situation, nor of the touching sight afforded by this resurrection of the works and arts of the faith upon an heretical soil. This, you are told, is a church built by a converted minister ; this monastery was built in the solitude by such and such a gentleman ; this chapel upon a rock contains a picture of our Lord's Passion, and Protestants themselves come here to sing hymns ; this cross is the first which has appeared for three centuries upon a high road.

After ten days thus employed, I came alone to Oxford to rest, and to write in peace to those I love.

What a sweet and lovely place this Oxford is ! Picture to yourself, in a plain surrounded with hills, and watered by two rivers, an assemblage of Gothic and Greek monuments, churches, colleges, quadrangles, porticoes scattered about profusely, but gracefully, in noiseless streets terminating in vistas of trees and meadows. All these monuments devoted to letters and sciences have their gates open ; the stranger may walk in just as into his own house, because it is the resort of the beautiful, for all who appreciate it. One

crosses silent quadrangles, meeting here and there young men wearing the cap and gown; no crowd, no noise; a gravity in the air as well as in the walls darkened by age, for it seems to me that nothing is repaired here for fear of committing a crime against antiquity. And still the most exquisite cleanness is visible from top to bottom of the monuments. I never saw anywhere such well preserved monuments with such a beautiful air of decay. In Italy the buildings look young; here it is time which shows, without dilapidation, simply in majesty.

The town is small, and still it does not seem to want in size: the number of the monuments makes up for houses, and gives it a look of vastness. How my heart yearned for you, as I walked solitary amidst these young men of your own age! Not one of them knew or cared for me: I was to them as though I did not exist, and more than once tears started into my eyes at the thought that elsewhere I should have met friendly looks.

London is in parts magnificent; but in all the rest there reigns a huge and gloomy uniformity; its air is full of smoke, and its insignificant immensity lacks the grace of a thing with finish. Its population, although brisk, but badly hides a deal of misery; nothing appears greater than this people in its insti-

tutions, nothing more puny as you look at them in the streets.

I shall not be going to Ireland, I have reasons for shortening my exile. I intend returning to the Continent on the 22d of this month, and going to our convent of Chalais by the Rhine and Strasbourg. I shall there pass Easter-tide, and probably one or two months, if not the whole summer. What joy it would give me to see you on your return to Paris. Could you not come back by the Rhone and Saône? The rail makes that way easy and short. Still take care not to give displeasure to your family by asking it to let you take this road. The more it loves you, the more it must fear seeing you indifferent about delay in returning to it.

You must not be surprised at finding yourself over-matched in your doctor. It requires twenty years to make a good controversialist. As to his opinion about the impossibility of being chaste, it is upset by the experience of a multitude of men who live so by sheer love of God, and who find in their sacrifice a flood of tender joys in which they never think of regretting the rapid and painful intoxication of the senses. Physicians think they know man; they know nothing but the corruptible part of him. When people have not taken the pains to overcome their

passions, and when they are unequal to the understanding of chaste joys, they console themselves in their vices by declaring them necessary, and cloak the testimony of a corrupt heart with the name of science. Do not be down-hearted at the slender success of your controversies; you are as yet too young to wield the arms of truth; you will one day do it successfully if you go on wishing to be useful to God and your fellows.

I rejoice at the thought that I am nearing you, and that we can give each other our hand, you from the Pyrenees, I from the Alps.



XXXVIII.

Advice to a Friend.—Perils and Hopes.

FLAVIGNY, *April 22, 1852.*

ACCORDING to my calculations, my dear friend, you ought to be at home now, since you told me that on the first of this month you would be journeying northwards. But you are such a hand at stopping on the way, for instance at Biarritz, to enjoy the things you like, that it is excusable to suppose you will take three weeks in getting from Bayonne to

Paris, just as in the good old times of our fathers. So you are back at last, but still far from me, and you hold out but very little hope of my seeing you before the next vacation! If I were in exile, it would be still worse. I must then console myself with the idea that you are only eight hours distant, upon the soil we both love, and must wait patiently for you. Only, pray just remember, now and again, that your arrival here will make me really happy, and in the meantime let me have particulars of your return and of your health.

Tell me whether your rambles and the warm air of the Pyrenees have given you that full and comfortable feeling which is the greatest sign of real health. Is your breathing quite free? Can you go up and down without any difficulty? Are you satisfied with yourself, soul and body?

As for myself, I am nearing the hour which will tell me I am fifty. I was born on the twelfth of May, 1802. What a glorious anniversary! I am already seven years older than my father was when he died. He was only forty-five. Poor little life! At my father's rate I ought to have been dead seven years ago; and in ten years hence, if God grant them to me, I shall be an old man. However, I am ready to die; I have done what I wanted here below, and

the rest of my life is good for nothing except to lend authority to the past. You, on the contrary, my dear friend, are coming forward. I hope to see you such as you promise to be, a useful, honorable, and distinguished man. You will have certain snares to avoid ; there is in your soul wherewith to make many mistakes ; but they will, I trust, be generous, of that kind which God forgives, and which He almost likes, so dear is generosity to Him.

Within the last four years I have seen much that has disgusted me with men ; you still remain to me as a pure image of the future, a hope. But you must know how to be moderate in order to be constant. Impetuosity and exaggeration frequently lead to sudden changes which surprise everybody, whilst moderation in opinions and acts easily holds the ground chosen. Above everything, be kind-hearted ; kind-heartedness being that which most likens us to God and disarms man. You have traces of it in your soul, but they are furrows which we cannot sufficiently deepen. Your lips and eyes are not yet as kindly, as they might be, and no art but the interior culture of kind-heartedness can give them that expression.

A kind and sweet way of judging others ends by stamping itself upon the countenance, and by giving it a look which draws all hearts. I have never felt

any affection but for kind-heartedness rendered sensible in the features. Everything without it leaves me cold ; even heads which indicate genius ; but the first comer who looks kind-hearted, touches and attracts me.

Since, then, you must be kind-hearted, you will come and see me in this dear solitude, in the midst of my children. We are twenty-four at table : to-morrow we shall be twenty-seven. This is the first time we have had such a numerous family in one single convent. But we are also going to hold our first provincial chapter, after thirteen years at the work of restoring our order in France. We have had more novices than usual ; among others an attaché of one of the embassies, who has gone the round of the world, and who came to us from Syria, got up after the Oriental fashion. He produced a prodigious sensation at Flavigny ; such that it was almost believed we had converted the Grand Turk. When you come, my dear child, no one will take you for the Grand Turk, but we shall all take you for a good and amiable Frenchman. Come, then. Perhaps I am destined to pass here, not far from my birth-place, and from the town of my youth, a long time, and the last of all. Your shadow and your memory must not be absent. I call you to my solitude, like St. Basil

used to call his friends to the monastery of Pontus, whither he went to look for quiet in his old age. You will find no St. Basil, but a soul which loves you, which has often told you so, and is never tired of doing so. Adieu, do not forget to remember me to your dear S., I am sorry I see him no longer with a few other little penitents, who used to console me. I would tell him to embrace you for me if any one else could do it as I should like to do it.

XXXIX.

Moderation in Work.—Flavigny.

FLAVIGNY, *May 31, 1851.*

I WAS unwilling to scold you for the sore throat you caught through your own fault, and which is now far away: but I will scold you for the doubts these little accidents give you touching your vocation. If you had seen me at your own age, you would never have thought I could live. I was thin and pale; my color came and went at every turn; I could not walk for a quarter of an hour in the streets of Paris without feeling extreme and painful fatigue: and yet, to-day no one can enjoy sounder or brisker health. Time

and sobriety of living have strengthened everything in me ; head, chest, muscles : the same will be the case with you, if you do not keep too late hours, and are careful not to work too hard. I say nothing of the rest, because you are a good pious young man, and your only enemy is excess of intellectual activity. Two of my friends, one at fifty, the other at forty, have become infirm on account of over-study. Don't you do the same. Give time his rightful due, as he will not let offenders off unpunished. What should I have gained to-day by having half-killed myself for the sake of doing things quickly ? Go to work gently, and be convinced that your larynx and everything else will become the very humble servants of your good desires. Besides, my dear friend, however precious health may be, it is not Hercules who does the most : a generous soul in a poor little body is mistress of the world.

I am making great preparations for your reception. We have at Flavigny a little wood at the foot of a long terrace, formerly the rampart of the town : a part of the little wood ran along the high-road, without any kind of enclosure : we have had the edge of it made steep ; it is composed of very hard and tolerably high rock, and by means of a little walling we have succeeded in shutting ourselves up at home. We have

also finished making paths in the interior of the wood, and everything has become quite worth your seeing, and very desirous of seeing you.

Stone benches, slightly rustic, have been put up and down, but in the shade, under rocks, so that you may sit down there when you are tired, and meditate quietly in gentle breezes which gather up the perfumes of our trees on their way.

I am ornamenting the house to the best of my power, but in a simple and natural manner. The workmen are very glad of the few days' work it gives them. It is the duty of every proprietor to give work according to the extent of his property, and religious are more strictly bound to do this than others, because they ought to be more charitable. A man finds in the heart of the poor, what he does not find in his own purse.

I wish you a good Whitsuntide: may God make you gentle and humble, and may He keep me the share I have in your heart, and for which you have a great return!

XL.

Upon the Conduct of Divine Providence.

FLAVIGNY, *June 3, 1852.*

THE very day you were writing to me, my dear friend, I was obeying the same impulse; and you must have got my letter at the same time that your own came to console me. I fear, however, lest I may have missed you on account of your change of residence, and consequently, independently of the pleasure I take in it, I must send you a few lines. Besides, I have to clear myself with you, since you seem to construe my absence into insensibility. At no time, believe me, would a journey to Paris have afforded me more pleasure. I had, at last, my spiritual family, and a greater number of very dear friends than ever. To pass the remainder of my life there, after so much wandering and agitation, I should consider a blessing; but our Good Master has not willed it. He doubtless saw that I loved and was loved too much; and He wanted to tear me from the place where He has never left me any number of years together. I am tied down by very weighty and very various matters at this moment, and although I seem free to go where I like, the reality is that I am obey-

ing what I consider imperative duties. When I resigned my seat in the Constituent Assembly in 1848, no one understood me : to-day who regrets my having done so ? What good could I have done in that resort of powerless passions, and what thanks do I not owe God for having shown me early that that was not my place ? In 1836, when I left at the outset the pulpit of Notre Dame, in order to go to Rome, I was no better understood, and yet I came back stronger, with more authority, surer of bringing the work to a conclusion, and besides, I restored in the interval, a religious order in France.

Was this losing time ? To-day other previsions keep me away, and however painful it be to live away from you in particular, I make this painful sacrifice to my conscience. Beautiful things do not, as you state, pass away ; but sweet things are mingled with bitterness, and we must learn to put up with these alternations of enjoyment and separation. God has tutored me gradually to solitude, abandonment, and absence, to the ebb and flow of everything : and without having a stoical heart I am better adapted than others for so chequered a lot. Don't be angry with me then ! I clasp you for ever to my bosom, like a well-loved child. We shall see one another here and there ; we will take the days God' may give us

together, we will engrave them in our memory. I will come and see you, and you me, as we may be able, until at last eternity shall give us, in presence of God, the power of never being absent from one another. That time will be here very quickly!

I am glad you are beginning to visit our house of the Carmes. Is your new apartment roomier than the last? It seemed to me that you had not enough air for your lungs. The house you speak of must be a new one, that is to say, narrow, split up into tiny holes without breadth, length, or height, which our architects have the heartlessness to call rooms. Are you comfortable in it?

I abhor tyranny; but if ever I were king, my first decree would be to define the space a Frenchman requires in order to live. The rapacity of builders will soon bring our houses down to those cages of the times of Louis XI. in which people used to shut up those they didn't like. That kind of thing is very much cried down, and people don't seem to imagine that it was then only an exception, and that to-day it is the rule. Talk to me, then, about your cage, tell me whether you can stand up straight in it, lie down at full length, and receive a friend there, three very precious things in this world.

I should never get tired of treating you to my

small talk. But I must leave you for my friends the Hindoos, of whom I am at present reading something in my capacity of a Catholic monk. Adieu! then, my dear child, and don't scold me any more for not loving you enough.

XLI.

Against falling off in the Accomplishment of
Christian Duties.

FLAVIGNY, *June 21, 1852.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOU have written me a good letter, for which I thank you. You must not be surprised at your liability to fall off: in this we are all alike. Stability here below is a chimera. We push forward, we fall back, we sail with the current, we row against it; such is the summary of our life. Besides, your health is a natural cause of weakness and remissness, which I thoroughly understand. The most painful mortifications are those which we do not ourselves will, which neither begin nor end where we want them. A man may have made interior and exterior acts of humility for weeks: an occasion presents itself, and a simple want of regard in another puts him out.

As for work, it seems to me there is one description very easy, and not fatiguing; it is reading: not random reading, but serious and persistent reading. We thus acquire, especially at your age, when the memory is still young and vigorous, a vast amount of knowledge, almost as a pastime. The Imitation tells us that we ought always to be either reading, writing, meditating, or praying: "*aut legendo, scribendo, meditando, vel orando.*" The alternate use of these kinds of work, fills up and gives a charm to life. Reading suffices to occupy the mind, to nourish it, to elevate and purify it: and I have never been able to understand how wealthy men, with a library at hand, could feel time on their hands, or even become corrupt. Idleness is the fruitful mother of corruption, and reading, although not hard work, suffices to put idleness to flight.

You must pay no attention to the trouble and darkness which comes over your mind at times. We must betimes feel our own emptiness, and see the astounding misery of our nature, as well as its frightful corruption. There is not a single one of us in whom there are not the makings of a saint as well as of a ruffian. This is what explains those monsters of debauchery and cruelty. At bottom they were not perhaps naturally more wicked than others, but

imagination and power put an end to all restraint. The devil is as bad as he is, simply because he is highly endowed and knows no moral restraint.

I recommend you to be always regular in your confessions and communions, and generally in all the exercises prescribed you. This subjection is very useful, although we frequently imagine it would be better to follow the irregular impulse of sentiment.

Adieu, my dear child, do not be down-hearted, take every day as it comes, and serve God. Don't make plans. God will call you at His own and your own time. This is the most simple, the safest, and the gentlest course.



XLII.

Upon Forgetfulness of the World.

FLAVIGNY, *July 6, 1852.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I AM setting out for Toulouse, and shall not be back at Flavigny before the 27th of July. We shall be very near one another for a few days, and still we shall not meet. What you tell me of your absence from Paris goes to my heart, except one point

upon which I cannot agree with you. You fear lest I may be forgotten. Alas! my dear friend, the sweetest thing in the world is to be forgotten by men, except by those who love us and are loved by us. The rest in noticing us unsettle us more than they give us joy; and when we have completed our task, ploughed up a furrow, great or small, in which we have sown good seed, the greatest satisfaction is to leave it in the hands of Providence, and disappear in His bosom. Therefore the thought of being forgotten does not affect me: I rather rejoice at it, and the only thing which gives me any pain in the separation, beyond being deprived of my friends, is the thought that perhaps I might be of use to a few young souls like your own. But no man can do all good at once; what he does on one side he loses on another, and God alone embraces at once in the work of His goodness, all times and all places.

XLIII.

Community Life.

FLAVIGNY, *November 3, 1852.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I WAS doubting what had become of you, when your kind little letter came and relieved me of my anxiety. You are quite right in believing that community life is a source of great strength, and that it is the surest road to being useful and spiritual. Isolation confines us to ourselves : and individually we are very puny both in point of intellect and virtue. By being many under one rule, we assist, enlighten, support, and edify one another ; the strength of each individual is increased tenfold, and the least takes a certain standing beside the one who surpasses him

I am daily discovering, in the souls which God throws across my path, the sacred flame which poor M. de la Mennais had kindled around him ; nearly all have, notwithstanding the break-up, retained a certain remnant of that first communion ; the same is the case with all those who associate for a common end under one chief and one law. It is the effect of a will of Providence, or rather better of that great

and mysterious trinity in unity, which is the essence of the Divine Being, and to which we are in a manner likened by our feeble associations in this world.



XLIV.

Upon Detachment of Heart.

TOULOUSE, *November 9, 1853.*

I WAS daily expecting, my dear friend, the news of your entrance at —— which your letter has just brought me. You must not be surprised at the pain of the beginning. I myself, even at my age, never enter upon a new position, were it but the foundation of a house, without experiencing sadness and melancholy. The very change of place is painful to me. How much more so a total change of life! You are passing from extreme liberty, with every kind of affection around you, to a rule under which actions, hours, and relations are regulated and controlled. It would take much less to sadden nature, independently of the question of one's vocation by God, and one's dispositions. Jesus Christ Himself, on the eve of His sacrifice, felt depressed, and He asked God to take the chalice from His lips. What

must be the case with us? Afterwards the rule becomes sweet: the animal part of our being bends to it; the soul gathers peace from it; she finds that it puts her in the way of acquiring every virtue.

As to the impression produced upon you by certain doctrines heard during your retreat, you must bear in mind that no individual preacher and no book is infallible. There are many ways of setting forth the doctrines of perfection, and those of a particular man or of a particular order may, without being blamable, easily be unsuited to the spiritual taste God has given us.

Detachment is undoubtedly a law of the Gospel, and an essential of perfection: but it does not thence follow that we are to love no reasonable creature with a love more special than the one we are bound to show to everybody. Well-regulated affections, that is, those made subordinate to the law of God and to the love we owe Him above all things, are no bar to holiness. The lives of the saints, beginning with that of our Lord, are full of such affections. No one will venture to say, I think, that our Lord did not love St. John and Magdalen with tenderness and predilection, and it would be singular if Christianity, founded upon the love of God and men, ended in nothing but dryness of soul towards all that is not

God. The thing is that passion often finds its way into friendships, and this is what makes them dangerous and hurtful. Passion upsets both the senses and the reason, and too frequently ends in evil and in sin. This is why the masters of the spiritual life recommend detachment, but not want of affection. Unselfishness, far from destroying love, increases and feeds it. What ruins love is selfishness, and not the love of God; and there never was on earth more lasting, purer, or more tender love, than that which the saints cherished in their hearts, at once empty and full, empty of themselves and full of God.

I got to Toulouse on the 29th of October, at eleven at night, and on the morrow, according to my habit of putting off nothing which may be done, I took possession of our house, which is quiet, convenient, and sufficiently religious in look. Despite the eagerness of many persons to serve us, and show us kindness, I was somewhat sad. It is hard to find one's self at my age in a place with which one has had no previous connection, where one finds no personal memories, none of one's friends. Toulouse is, it is true, the cradle of St. Dominic, and the body of St. Thomas Aquinas rests there. That ought to be quite sufficient, but nature will always have a little of its own way. The saints were the only people who

found in prayer wherewith to transform every place into a paradise.

Our chapel is not yet blessed and inhabited by our Lord. We are waiting for the archbishop, who will not be here until the tenth of this month. We shall have a little feast for our first friends. It will probably take place on Friday the 18th, the day of the dedication of the Basilica of St. Peters.

Pray for me often. I have great trials as well as great consolations. One of my trials is your absence. I fear I shall not have the happiness of seeing you for eight or ten months. Between this and then you will become holier and consequently more lovable. You do not say whether your friend is with you. I embrace you both, in order to prevent you from being jealous any more. Adieu.



XLV.

Upon Steadfastness in Conviction.

FLAVIGNY, *March* 22, 1853.

THE news you give me of M. Ozanam is a source of great affliction to me. He will be a very painful loss to the Catholics of France, and to me in particular. He belonged to the few eminent men

who in France have, despite public vicissitudes, held by old and honorable convictions. His loss will go to thin ranks already scant, but he will leave them in a memory like his life, pure. You must not despair, my dear child, because the battalion of disinterested and faithful souls is so small in this world, even among those who have a common faith in God and in His Christ: this has ever been and ever will be the case until the end. The majority of men are weak and vacillating; they yield to the current which at a given moment sweeps over and carries away the world. Unshaken convictions dwell only in profound minds, and in hearts finely tempered by the hand of God. Do we belong to these latter? God only knows. But however great our obligation of judging ourselves diffidently, we must at least aim at one thing, namely, to become men of strong, pure, and disinterested convictions, and frequently call to mind the beautiful saying of St. Paul: "*Gloria nostra hæc est, quod in hoc mundo conversati sumus in simplicitate cordis, et sinceritate Dei.*"* You are young: you will see more uplifting and downfalling than I shall see henceforth: nerve yourself against these shocks, and know, my child, that the surest way to be

* "Our glory is this, that we have conversed in this world in simplicity of heart and in the sincerity of God,"

invariably consistent is to shun ambition, and that a man is not ambitious when he knows how to circumscribe his tastes, and to seek his happiness in God, in study, and in a few souls which love him. I belong to the latter as regards you. But not being of your age, you will lose me before the end of your perils. May my memory afford you a little light from afar !



XLVI.

Saint Maximin's and Sainte-Baume.—All
for God's Glory.

CHALAIS, *April* 28, 1853.

SINCE I got your kind and dear letter of Easter Tuesday, my dear friend, I have made a little journey in the south, as far as a place in Provence called Bargemont, which is almost at the extremity of France, towards Nice. I went to see a chapel and a piece of land which has been offered us for the erection of a convent of our order, but I did not think it would suit us. On that occasion I revisited Marseilles, Toulon, Hyères, and visited at the foot of the Sainte-Baume, our ancient church of Saint Maximin, the finest our order possessed in France. It is a basilica without a transept, and Gothic withal, which

gives it quite a peculiar character of simplicity and grandeur. It contains some very exquisite wood carvings, in which one of our lay-brothers has represented the greater part of our saints with appropriate symbols. The head of St. Mary Magdalen is preserved here in a crypt. She lived a number of years near here in the grotto of Sainte-Baume. I could not ascend to Sainte-Baume, and contented myself with venerating the saint's head. You know that St. Mary Magdalen is, together with St. Cecily, the protectress of our order: the one representing penance, the other the Christian arts, and these are, in fact, two gifts which have been continued to our order in a remarkable degree.

Ought I to tell you that I was everywhere received with great marks of sympathy? I am sometimes astonished at it. At Draguignan, where it was known I was to pass, I found at the curé's house a large number of men, the mayor, the secretary-general of the prefecture, and outside a large crowd. This is the first time I have seen so many people come together to see me, and at such a distance from Paris. I enjoy this kind of thing simply as a sign that I am loved, and not through pride. Besides, how quickly does popular curiosity subside, and to what is it owing? God has thrown me into peculiar circumstances, which

have formed a something more or less strange which goes to make up my physiognomy. What moves me is to receive from time to time proofs that my voice and my writings have touched souls. Nothing is comparable to this enjoyment, and it is an entirely pious one, as God is too far concerned in it to allow our thoughts any other turn than towards Him, the Father of Light.

In your last letter you told me things which moved me: but everything you say easily makes its way to my heart, and makes me feel that I love you.

My stay at Chalais, which I reached yesterday, will not be long. I shall be leaving on Ascension-day for Flavigny. There is still a little snow here, and it is tolerably cold. With the exception of the snow we were scarcely better off in Provence, where the dry and cutting mistral wind contrasted strangely with the orange-trees and flowers in full bloom. Alas, nothing is pure and perfect here below! We must be perpetually feeling the sting somewhere.

By the way, I do not know when I shall enjoy the pleasure of seeing you. I wish to return to Paris, even were it only casually, as late as possible, notwithstanding the friends I have there, to meet whom is always a great consolation to me. There is too much to sadden me there, and I have other reasons

for avoiding interviews. Solitude is a great preservative against numbers of perils.

My dear child, let me hear from you, talk to me freely of all that goes on in your heart, and know that I love you, if it is necessary to repeat it.



XLVII.

Advice to a Young Preacher.

FLAVIGNY, *June 3, 1853.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE heard with pleasure of your appearance in the pulpit of X——, and of your intention to preach there on the five Sundays of the Month of Mary. The ministry of the word is a great and a difficult one. A great deal of study and a great many attempts are necessary to make an eloquent and even a passable preacher. Many young ecclesiastics break down on the way, because, when once *brought out*, as people say, they give up reading and meditation, leading an indifferent and nomad life, and are thus used up in a few years. This is owing to the difficulty of sharing one's life between two things so different as the activity of the pulpit and the laborious repose of the cell. Activity nearly always gets

the upper hand, and very quickly exhausts itself. Speak little ; give much time to preparation. Read the Holy Scriptures over and over again : do it incessantly. With the Scriptures and the Summa of St. Thomas a man can outdo everything.

I prayed for the success of your sermon as you asked me, and am glad to hear it did succeed. You have, as far as I can see, everything necessary to preach the word of God with fruit : firm faith, real piety, and disinterestedness, a desire that God should be known and loved, and finally natural gifts quite able to bear out those of grace. Work hard, and the talents given you will increase in proportion to the pains you take. No amount of talent will go far unbacked by work. Work is the key to eloquence and knowledge, as well as to virtue.



XLVIII.

The Grande-Chartreuse.—Bad Books.—Separation from Friends.

FLAVIGNY, *June 30, 1853.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

SINCE the receipt of your dear and kind letter I have made a journey to Oullins and Chalais. We

left Oullins with fifteen of our pupils and crossed from Chalais to the Grande-Chartreuse, a magnificent series of mountains and valleys unknown and unfrequented except by cows, wood-cutters, and forest-keepers: for the sake of accuracy, let me add, by the smugglers between France and Savoy. Every one goes to the Grande-Chartreuse by the two roads from Saint-Laurent-du-Pont and le Sappey, no one by the mysterious diagonal which cuts from Chalais across precipices, solitudes, magic sites, valleys dotted with meadows, and pine-clad rocks. I hope you will one day make this excursion with me. It is very different from Flavigny and its tiny woods, which still pleased you somewhat, and which I am about to leave for Mattaincourt, in Lorraine, where I am to preach the panegyric of the Blessed Peter Fourier, before I don't know how many bishops and a crowd of pilgrims. I intend publishing this discourse, and will send you a copy, however unworthy it be of your illustrious attention.

I am not overpleased at the idea of your reading such books as those you mention to me. You are, it is true, no longer a child, but at every time of life poison is dangerous. What is there to read in Voltaire after his dramatic works? His *Contes*, his *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, his *Essai sur les Mœurs des*

nations, and that multitude of nameless pamphlets launched at every turn against the Gospel and the Church? Twenty pages enable us to judge of their literary worth and of their moral and philosophical poverty. I was between seventeen and eighteen when I read that series of mental debauchery, and I have never since been tempted to open a single volume, not because I was afraid of their doing me harm, but from a deep conviction of their worthlessness. Unless it be for purposes of reference with a useful end, we must confine ourselves to the masterpieces of great names; we have not time enough for the rest.

We have consequently still less for those writings which are, as it were, the common sewers of the human intellect, and which, notwithstanding their flowers, contain nothing but frightful corruption. Just as a good man shuns the conversation of lost women and of dishonorable men; so a Christian ought to avoid reading works which have never done anything but harm to the human race. Rousseau is preferable to Voltaire: he has the sentiment of the beautiful and generous, and he does not despise his reader. But the charm of his writings, useful betimes to young men who respect nothing, is but little to a soul which possesses the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. We read in the Life of St. Jerome that he

was scourged by an angel, who whilst striking him, reproached him for reading Cicero with more ardor than the Gospel. How much more would your reading deserve this chastisement if God always showed us in this life what He thinks of our actions.

The reproach you make me about the shortness of my letters is grounded upon another mistake. It is a very pleasing thing to write to those one loves; and if life was intended simply for the enjoyment of lawful pleasures, we should never tire, near or far, of conversing with those souls whose life forms part of ours. But, alas! we have so much to do before satisfying the inclinations which have the greatest attraction for us! When we read the lives of the saints, we are terrified at the small amount of time they gave to the simple relations of the heart, because they believed they were thereby depriving of their aid those who have no friends here below! Forgive me my brevity, then. A sentence is short, but one sentence may suffice to tell us all that it is sweetest to hear, and it is enough for us to know that it is frequently repeated.

A thousand things to your two friends. I embrace them with joy, if you will tolerate such a piece of audacity, as a mark of my tender affection for yourself.

XLIX.

To rejoice in Success for God's Sake.—Of the Purity of the Religious Vocation.

FLAVIGNY, *July 28, 1853.*

I CANNOT possibly regret having kept you awake the other night, my dear friend, nor even having forfeited your praise. I feel that self-love has got very weak within me, and that I am no longer a prey to the fever of glory, if ever I had the misfortune to be so. But it is always a satisfaction to have spoken well of our good God, since well-speaking helps others on to well-doing. It is undoubtedly uncomfortable that nature can have no share in this satisfaction: in what has it not got a share?

But when the groundwork of the sentiment is good, God certainly forgives the little frailty which is mixed up with it. What touches me is the thought of having suggested a few good thoughts to you, of having moved your soul, and next the expression of affection you let fall for myself.

I am glad you have decided upon the order of X——. There are several peculiarities of your nature ill adapted for the religious life; but you are

young, and I have learnt by experience that a firm will, allied to a sincere and ardent faith, gradually softens down defects of temper, as well as the imperfections of the mind. You will, I make no doubt, get the better of your rather lively spirit of independence; our Lord will nail you sweetly to His cross, and you will forget there, in communion with souls and Himself, all the deceitful delights of this world. Entering into the priesthood with an idea other than that of sacrificing themselves to the mystery of the redemption, is what makes bad or indifferent priests; everything else may be repaired or perfected but this original sin. Now, your intention is certainly pure, devoted and generous, and consequently the leaven of revolted nature in you will give way before the daily embrace of your crucifix. How I love you! The reserve of age does not allow me to tell you so like I feel it. I love you at once like a friend and a child, because I am on the boundary whence we descry at the same moment the two extremities of life.

I wish you every success in your examination for the licentiate. We are getting ready here for the feast of St. Dominic, which, on account of the blessing of our chapel, will be something great this year. Their Lordships, the Bishops of Dijon and

Autun are coming, as well as M. de Montalembert, he to whom you take off your hat in the street.

Adieu, I embrace you with all the respect due to a man upon the eve of his licentiate.

L.

Frederic Ozanam.—*The Ere Nouvelle.*

CHALAIS, *September 17, 1853.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

SINCE your last letter I have done a good deal of work, and a great deal of travelling. We have taken possession of our college of Oullins, and I myself went to Toulouse to lay the foundation of a house of our order. His Lordship, the Archbishop of that town, consented very readily to it, and measures are being taken to buy and get ready a house for us. Toulouse is the cradle of St. Dominic, and the tomb of St. Thomas Aquinas. No town is to any religious order what this one is to us. Consequently, it seems to me, as though by settling there I crown my career, and that it will be the term of my labors and my life. It is probable that the business part of the matter will shortly be concluded, and I am hastening

to make the provincial visit of our houses in France and Belgium, in order to be free to devote myself to that work.

I shall twice take Paris on my way, once immediately, and a second time on my return from Belgium. The first time I shall spend but one day there; the second, five or six. This is as much as to tell you that I promise myself the pleasure of seeing you before my Toulouse exile.

I learned yesterday, by a Lyons paper, the death of poor M. Ozanam. It really saddened me. We were associated in 1848 in the foundation of a common work, and subsequently as well as previously we had remained true to the same motto, *religion, tolerance, civil and political liberty*.

This community of aim, and this steadfastness had become so rare, by the treason of so many others, that notwithstanding differences of opinion greater in 1848 than at any other time, I felt myself bound by esteem and attachment to that generous soul. He is a link broken off from the short chain of good, talented, and Christian men. Shall we get others? Shall we for our consolation see any more minds of that temper at the decline of our life? Alas! if such do arise, they will come but in distant contact with us; I shall be too old to join my life to theirs, they will see me

disappear in my turn like a stranger. You alone, younger than myself, will give me a place in your memory, and you will remember for a few days that you knew me and I loved you.

Your Thesis has come to hand. I do not congratulate you upon it, because I am no longer able, if ever I was, to pass an opinion upon the merits of a piece of jurisprudence; but I do congratulate you for being on the eve of sacrificing to God the position you have reached in the world. C—— will have told you he saw me at Sens. He came to me like a reminder of you, and whilst embracing him, I almost imagined I was clasping yourself to my breast. Adieu, then, until Sunday! It is a beautiful feast, but seems a long way off.



LI.

Upon Friendship.

TOULOUSE, *December 28, 1853.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WHEN I compare your two last letters, it seems to me that you have already made great progress in the spiritual life; you are beginning to get a little mastery over yourself, and what is incomparably

more, to acquire that incomprehensible ease of communion with God, and tender union with Him.

You are, it is true, still very weak with regard to creatures you love, and I don't know how far that is wrong when none of the rights of God are sacrificed by those affections: one single one of those affections appears dangerous, even when pure; it is that for those most loved by the world. The serpent is entwined too closely round their necks, to allow us to draw near without dread; we must always keep them at a safe distance.

But are not friendship, the memory of beautiful haunts, the love of letters, all that superior part of the soul's enjoyments, the portico of the temple in which we adore God, and where we love Him more than our own life? To love God properly whilst loving something else is a great secret; it is easy to put Him in the second place. This is a danger, I allow; but when this danger is avoided by complete solitude of the heart outside God, ought we not to fear a greater? In heaven we shall love God above all things: lost in the contemplation of His beauty and His goodness, it would seem that we should be able to look upon nothing else; but theology teaches us that in and even around Him we shall see all the companions of our eternal happiness. It tells us that

their happiness will increase our own. God will be everything, but we shall be something. It is true that here below, creatures, even the best, are not completely God's. The flesh, the world, and the devil have still a certain share in them, and by leaning on them we may fear falling away from God. This is one of the drawbacks of our present state, and perhaps the greatest; but then God has His share in them too: He dwells in those souls which love Him, and which are His temples, according to the saying of St. Paul. We may then live in them with Him, and when I look into myself for the effect of my affections, they do not seem to me to lessen the almost invincible attraction which draws me to a love of a much stronger and deeper character. We complain of the ingratitude and hardness we still find in the souls which love us most: we are right, God alone is fathomless tenderness. Everywhere else we can touch the shore, a sorrowful shore, where affections which we believed immortal suffer shipwreck! But this terrible catastrophe overtakes those souls especially which live away from God, and in which love is a passion of the senses much more so than of the heart. Where the senses are silent, where fleshly comeliness no longer moves, the affections are infinitely more lasting.

I have frequently noticed that young men abandoned

to their passions are, as it were, incapable of feeling and even of understanding friendship: love of the same sex necessarily implies purity, because there is behind this love nothing to attract the senses. This is the reason why real friendship is so scarce a thing. Hardly have young men come to the age when the passions are awakened, when they plunge headlong into disorder: their heart is dried up in the convulsions of unlawful pleasure, for man they have but a quenched and sterile eye, incapable of discovering and delighting in the beauty of the soul.

Even in those who realize what friendship is, it is not boundless: the barrier of our senses separates us in many points from those we love the best, and it is only in heaven that our embrace will be eternal. Until then, my poor little friend, we must love and forgive, like God who forgives us all our unfaithfulness. And yet He was crucified for us! Which of us, who believe we love so well, would have consented to be crucified for his friend?

Friday, the 30th of December, will positively see his Lordship the Archbishop of Toulouse come and bless our chapel and solemnly install our community; there will be a great dinner after the ceremony, at which the notabilities of the secular and regular clergy will be present. I must confess to you that we are

going to have green peas and Perpignan artichokes, a something dreadful, I think, for the installation of monks vowed to poverty and mortification: but as the dinner is a present, my objections to green peas and artichokes in mid-winter were overruled.

Just fancy, an old man of eighty, who, before the Revolution lived, when quite a child, opposite our great convent at Toulouse, and who was a great friend of the Fathers, has written me a long letter full of details of what took place in this poor convent on the eve of its fall: he gives me the names of our celebrated preachers, our professors, and leads me step by step into the most secret resorts of the community. He is overjoyed at seeing the restoration of our Order in the very spot where his youth saw it flourishing. It is thus that all things decay and revive. Here we are at the end of another year: I close it by embracing you tenderly and assuring you that I love you as well as a poor creature can who loves God and another creature who does the same.

LII.

Intimate Communications.—The Beautiful
and True.—Drinkable Gold.TOULOUSE, *Feb.* 2, 1854.

I HAVE just read your letter a second time, my very dear friend. After having done so, I took a penknife to scratch out and smooth over the corrections in it. I must tell you, since you are to have all my secrets, that I have a horror of corrections and amendments: I prefer leaving an unsuitable word to scratching out in a letter in order to substitute a more French or more expressive one. This is sacrificing interior to exterior beauty if you like, but I can't help it. Therefore whatever you let fall from your pen, be careful never to correct it. Besides, is it not a piece of vain coquetry to wish to be faultless in a letter? What does it matter about repetitions, overlong sentences, or discarded expressions: if we say what we feel just as it comes, that's enough, and I think I set you the example, although I have more to lose than you by writing bad French.

You were wrong in showing my last letter. Beautiful or not, it was for you alone, and I understand by

you alone those whom you love tenderly, and who are, as it were, a part of your soul: for I am obliged to take your soul with all its dependencies, under pain of not loving it thoroughly. This does not mean that I must absolutely love all those whom you do, but that I must have a liking for them and allow my affection for you to overflow a little into their heart. The knowledge that these things are communicated to others, that is strangers, chills the style, and one becomes disinclined to write with so much *abandon*. We do not mind opening ourselves out thoroughly to those we love, but we do not like to do it to every one: and then again, the communication of such things to strangers is simply spilling the sweetest fragrance of friendship.

We must be alone to read a page we love. You deserve a penance from me then: but you are still too young a religious to love penance, and I will let you off scot-free.

I am of your opinion: beauty alone moves the soul to its very depths. But you are wrong in contrasting beauty with goodness: there is no beauty without goodness. The beautiful is the harmony of the true and the good in one same thing, the mingled splendor of both; and if you were to meet a face in which perfection of line and absolute beauty of contour ex-

isted, without any expression of goodness in the eyes or on the lips, it would be the head of Medusa.

Goodness cannot, it is true, reach beauty: the latter supposes a certain splendor, and in this sense, goodness alone cannot move unto rapture.

Here I am already halfway through my work. On Sunday next, I shall give my fifth conference. Up to the present I have treated of *life, the life of the passions, moral life, and of the necessity of a life superior to the moral life*: I am there now. The audience is as large as possible, and very sympathetic, although the middle is occupied by grown-up men, and the youth are somewhat kept back to the sides. Our little chapel is always full, and we are beginning to have a large number of confessions. The clergy deserve all praise. I am presently going to dine at the Great Seminary, it being their feast-day, and in a few days one of us will preach the retreat at the little Seminary.

By the way, my dear friend, you would never imagine the treatment I am undergoing for my larynx: I am drinking simply nothing else but *potable gold*; do you hear, gold, formerly discovered by the famous magician Cagliostro, and recovered by an old diplomatist, who, having nothing more to do with the unravelling of human affairs, has for the last

twenty years been searching for a modest elixir to prolong our life, just to two, or it may be, three hundred years. He gave me a little bottle of *drinkable gold*, and next Sunday before my conference I am bravely going to take seven drops of it in a cup of black tea. This worthy man will be in high glee at seeing me with his gold in my larynx, and I cannot deny him this satisfaction. Just let me ask whether at Paris, with all its skill, I should ever have had such luck! I will give you an account of the experiment.

Adieu! my dear little friend. I think you are beginning to love our good God, and to feel the effects of separation from the world. I rejoice at it with you, and love you, if possible, more than ever.



LIII.

Melancholy.—The Crimean War.—The Death of M. de la Mennais.

TOULOUSE, *March 6, 1854.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOU were very wrong in not writing to me, as you were going to do, before having received my answer to your last letter; and this must not

happen again. Write to me when your heart tells you to do so, as frequently and at as great length as you like, provided you do not get offended if I do not answer you as quickly as you could wish. If you loved me well you would hear my answer through space, you would know that I was happy whilst reading you over and over again, and you would forgive me for being behind-hand on paper.

The fine weather reminds me as well as yourself of our walks at the present season, in the woods of Bellevue and Meudon. Shall we ever take any more such there or elsewhere? God only knows: but what is certain is that we shall have the joy of continuing them under more beautiful shades in an endless spring. That is where we must appoint our final meeting. The rest is, as you say, but a preparation, a prelude, a vestibule; and the wretchedness of men without faith is to wish to exhaust their friendship here below. We shall see one another but rarely perhaps here below, but one day we shall see one another for ever. You will then be very beautiful, and I shall have recovered my youth to contemplate yours. Between this and then I shall grow old, and you will too; but this old age is but a dream which covers the approach of renovation and immortality. In the meanwhile we shall have sad days; there are

such everywhere. Melancholy is the great queen of souls which feel deeply: she touches them without knowing how or why, at a secret, unexpected hour. The ray of light which gladdens others, saddens them; the festival which moves and enraptures others, pierces them with a dart. Scarcely can God and our Lord dispel in the heart which loves them these vain and bitter clouds.

This kind of suffering is the more difficult to master because the cause of it is unreal.

You ask me for my opinion on the Crimean War. I believe it to be just. The union of France and England against the arrogance of schism and despotism is a great thing. The law of Christian nations is to prevent the world from falling under one master as in the time of the Roman Empire. This is the reason why everything which, in regenerated Europe, has tended to this boundless ambition, has met with an insurmountable obstacle. Charlemagne himself divided his empire, the popes themselves opposed successfully the too great extension of the Holy Roman Empire. France, for a century and a half, from Charles V. to the treaty of Westphalia, worked at the humiliation of the house of Austria, which had succeeded to the two worlds; Europe formed a coalition against Louis XIV., and overthrew Napoleon.

It is Russia's turn. The thing is begun, and whatever may be the present issue, the path is marked out: Russia will go no further; and if she madly persists in plans condemned by God, she will perish in them. Still, I do not think the Turks will remain long encamped in Europe. God is following up two ends: their expulsion and the limiting of Russia's power. These two ends seem contradictory, but God reconciles what seems irreconcilable, and serenity is on the outskirts of the tempest. Consequently, make up your mind to see Russia humbled and the Turks driven out sooner or later.

You said a word to me about M. de la Mennais. His death followed quickly upon the prayers so many souls offered up to God for him. What a death! No single one in ecclesiastical history has produced so painful an impression upon me, not even that of Arius. Arius was stricken ignominiously down, in a place set apart for the vilest wants of the human body; but he had not himself written his last will about his funeral.

That abandonment, that pauper's coffin, that common grave without a single token left to a single friend, that universal silence over a tomb which might have been so illustrious, all this makes up a kind of spectre which haunts me. Thirty years ago, when I

came to Paris, I found M. de la Mennais looked upon as a father of the Church: and now he is dead, an infidel, without principles, without belief, without friends, leaving a memory which will remain in Christendom like an eternal weight.

When I call to mind all the circumstances of my relations with him; the time when I saw him good and happy, surrounded by a flourishing youth; the misgivings I had of his fall, our separation, the twenty years that have rolled by since, between the time when I used to sleep at his door at Paris, Rome, la Chesnaie, and that grave which has closed over him for ever. What different remembrances, which acquire from one another a power under which the mind sinks in astonishment! I felt, I confess to you, fortified; this terrible judgment opens my eyes to the past; I thank God for having so quickly enlightened me with regard to my duties, and having given me the courage to accomplish them publicly. The first separation was very painful: this one is too; but it is qualified by a sentiment of the justice of God, of a thing done, of a drama played out. God has pronounced, blessed be His holy name.

Be always very gentle and very humble, my dear child; everything may be made up for by these two

virtues, but nothing compensates for their absence. I press you to my heart.

(We here give several fragments of letters of Father Lacordaire, touching M. de la Mennais.)

LIV.

December 11, 1832.

I SHALL leave La Chesnaie this evening ; honor obliges me so to do, since I am convinced that, for the future, my life would be useless to you, on account of the difference of our views touching the Church and society : which difference has but daily increased, notwithstanding my earnest endeavors to follow the development of your opinions. I believe that, neither during my life, nor even long after, will republican institutions be possible in France, or in any other country of Europe, and I cannot adopt any system grounded upon an opposite view. Without giving up my liberal ideas, I see and believe that the Church has had grave reasons, in the profound corruption of parties, for refusing to hurry matters according to our wishes. I respect her views and my own. Your opinions may be more exact, more pro-

found, than mine, and, seeing your natural superiority over me, I ought to be satisfied that such is the case : but man is not made up of reason alone ; and not being able to rid myself of the ideas which divide us, it is but right that I should put an end to a community of life, which is a great advantage to me, and a burden to you. Conscience, no less than honor, obliges me to do so, for I must employ my life somehow or other in God's service ; and not being able to follow you, what should I be doing here but wearying and discouraging you, shackling your plans, and sacrificing myself to no purpose ?

You will never know but in heaven the suffering I have undergone for the last year, from the simple fear of giving you pain. In all my doubts, in all my perplexities, I have had you alone in view ; and however bitter may one day be my existence, nothing will ever equal the grief which I feel on the present occasion. I leave you in peace with the Church, higher than ever in public opinion, so superior to your enemies, that they are as nothing. I could choose no better time to do that which, while giving you some pain, will, believe me, spare you much greater. I do not exactly know as yet what I shall do, whether I shall go to the United States, or remain in France, or in what position. Wherever I may be,

you will ever have proofs of the respect and attachment for you which I shall ever cherish,—and I beg of you to accept this expression of them from a broken heart.



LV.

October 6, 1833.

M. DE LA MENNAIS declares that "*for many reasons, and chiefly because it is the province of the Holy See to decide what is good and useful for the Church, he is resolved to stand aloof from all matters touching her.*" I have to remark that nothing can be more anti-Catholic than this saying. Were this the case, the Church would be unfortunate indeed. Her children have never any right, under whatever pretext, to stand aloof from what concerns her: they must act according to their position and capacity, as M. de la Mennais has done up to the present; but their action must be accompanied by submission to the direction of the Holy See; they are not to be their own guides. No amount of talent, no services however great, compensate for the harm done to the Church by a separation, of whatever nature, or by an action done without her bosom. I would rather throw myself into the sea

with a millstone round my neck, than entertain hopes, ideas, or support even good works outside the Church.



LVI.

December 2, 1833.

M. DE LA MENNAIS' misfortune does not so much lie in his haughty character, in his very imperfect knowledge of human and divine things, as in his contempt of the pontifical authority, and of the painful situation of the Holy See. He has blasphemed Rome in her misfortunes; it is the crime of Cham, the crime which has, next to deicide, been visited on earth with the most palpable and lasting punishment. Woe to him who troubles the Church! Woe to him who blasphemes the Apostles! The lot of the Church is to be victorious still; the time of Antichrist is not yet come. M. de la Mennais' fall will not check the formidable march of truth: this very fall will but serve it.

LVII.

February 3, 1834.

I AM accused of being merciless towards him ! Ah ! if ever I had discovered in the Abbé de la Menais a single real yearning, a single sentiment of humility, that interesting something which misfortune lends its victim, I should have been unable to see it and think of it without being moved to the inmost depths of my soul.

When we were together, and I fancied I discovered in him resignation, sentiments devoid of pride and passion, I cannot express what I felt. But these moments were few indeed, and all that I can call to mind is stamped with a character of wilfulness and blindness such as dries up pity. You I pity, because you are suffering through the fault of another, because, although there are in you many personal illusions and faults which God will one day lay to your charge, still you are a victim — a victim of the goodness of your heart. But he ! well, since my friend is so unjust towards me, I must expect justice from God alone. He will bear witness to the purity of my intentions ; He will say why I sided with the Church against a man ; He will show on which side was single-minded faith, candor,

and consistency ; He will show who was, of all, the real friend of the Abbé de la Mennais, and whose was the advice which, if followed, would have raised his glory and virtue higher than ever.

The hour of justice will, I feel convinced, come round sooner than is imagined ; but if it does not come in this world, I shall not find fault with Providence. The accomplishment of my duty amply satisfies me.



LVIII.

April 17, 1834.

NOW, I have completely fulfilled my duty towards M. de la Mennais. I have said touching the school he desired to found, that which a ten years' personal experience has taught me, and had I done nothing but that in my life, I should die happy. My conscience is at ease, it breathes at last ; after ten years' suffering I am beginning to live. A few at least understand me ; they know that I have become neither a republican, a *juste-milieu*, nor a legitimist, but that I have made one step towards that noble character of a priest, above all parties, though sympathizing with every weakness. They know that the result of my journey to Rome has been to soften

down my ideas, to withdraw me from the fatal whirlwind of polemics, to attach me exclusively to the things of God, and through the things of God, to the slow progressive happiness of nations. They know that the only cause of my separation from a celebrated man, was my unwillingness to plunge deeper with him into those unfortunate daily politics, and the impossibility of getting him to take up the position where the applause of the Church awaited him, and where he would have done more for the emancipation of humanity than he will ever do upon his present ground.



LIX.

Obedience.—*M. de la Mennais.*

I LIVE alone, in continual study, calm, trustful in God and the future. Nothing can be done without the Church and time. Had the Abbé de la Mennais but willed, what a glorious opening for him. He was at the height of his glory, and I have never been able to understand how a man of that cast could have ignored the value of what God had left for him. The religious task forsaken by him is so grand, so easy, so much above all others, that in three months,

in Paris, I have moved more heads and hearts than I could possibly have done during the fifteen years of the Restoration. Obedience is painful, but experience has taught me that sooner or later it is rewarded, and that God alone knows what is good for us. The light breaks in upon him who submits, as upon one who opens his eyes.

The accomplishment of duty with courage and single-mindedness is the surest way to come at the real and deserved admiration of men. Time is required for everything, the thing is to be always ready without forestalling the hour marked out by Providence. What a difference between 1834 and 1844! Ten years have sufficed to change the whole scene. We can scarcely estimate what we have gained during this last fight in union, strength, and prospects. Even supposing the free education question lost for fifty years, we have gained even more than that itself, we have won the instrument which will get it for us, and with it much of the freedom necessary for the salvation of France and the world. Had the poor Abbé de la Mennais but known how to wait, what a moment for him! Alas! we told him so so often! He would be greater than ever. Humility and confidence in the Church were the only two things required. Up to the very last the position

was a splendid one, in fact so much so that it has won the day. Younger and more single-minded, we have bowed to the direction of the Church; we have acknowledged exaggeration of style and even of views; and God who sounds the reins and the heart cast upon us a look of mercy; He was gracious enough not to crush us, and even to make use of us. The Church has never presented an instance of a greater reward given to submission, nor of a more terrible chastisement inflicted on revolt.



LX.

Poverty and Friendship.

March 15, 1833.

IN general, the great men of antiquity were poor. This is the rock upon which every one splits to-day; people no longer know how to live on a little. It is true that, used as I have been to live poor from my birth, I may be unable to see the difficulties in the way of those whose habits are not like my own. But retrenchment of the useless, the want even of the *relatively necessary*, is the high road to Christian detachment, as well as to antique strength of character.

Whoever has attained the moral beauty of life, not only before God, but before men, cannot fall by those exterior reverses without showing that his greatness of soul was hollow, his cleverness simply good fortune. What is most wanting to our age is a man able to gratify every desire, and content with little. For my part, humanly speaking, I ambition nothing more. A great heart in a little house, is of all things here below that which has ever touched me most. The Abbé de la Mennais dying poor and faithful at La Chesnaie, would have been the hero of this age, in which the fortune of every man is above his deserts.



LXI.

Equality and Friendship.

TOULOUSE, April 3, 1854.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

ALLOW me to give you a good scolding for the very obsequious manner in which you talk to me. Now, for the future, let not it be father, especially *Reverend Father*, but, my friend. For I am a very sincere friend of yours, and although spiritually I may have been of use to your soul, still it is not on that side that my heart has met yours, and that God

has given me a leaning for you. You were a believer : I did not snatch you from the darkness of ignorance and error, and introduce you into the pure region of light in which you now dwell. Even had I done so, friendship is of its own nature greater in scope than paternity ; it supposes benevolence of a freer and more open-hearted character than the latter ; and such is the nature of my feelings towards you, and of yours towards me, unless I mistake my desire for the reality. If you feel this return, if your heart be really inclined towards mine, allow it to follow its bent simply and naturally ; talk and write to me as to an equal, according to Seneca's saying, "*Amicitia aut pares invenit aut facit.*" I am older than you, and if the soul were absolutely the victim of time, the disproportion would be irremediable. Besides, if God has given me a little talent and a little renown, you yourself know how trifling a thing it is, and nothing would be more dreadful than glory if it stood in the way of affection. Forget, then, what I ought to forget myself, and which as compared with virtue is nothing. We both know and love God. This puts us upon a perfect and eternal equality. Those who do not live in God can be separated by insurmountable barriers on account of all the differences which naturally arise in this world, differences of birth, fortune, talent, and glory :

but in God, in whom we both live, the world disappears, the infinite leaves between those who love each other no distance but that of love, which draws everything together.

I trust, then, that you will treat me for the future with sweet and amiable familiarity. I beg of you to do so, and I believe myself deserving of it on account of the deep affection God has given me for you.

The thought of seeing you again gladdens me, and this thought may perhaps prevent me from being as piously sad as I ought to be during the great week upon which we are entering.

LXII.

The Memory of Frederic Ozanam.

TOULOUSE, *April 10, 1854.*

YOUR letter, my dear friend, crossed one of mine. In it you remind me of my wish to devote a few pages to the memory of M. Ozanam, and my promise to that effect. As to that promise, I only remember having said that I would willingly preach at a service for him which was then contemplated, at the church of the Carmes. I believe also, I said that I would make out an opportunity of speaking of him in one

of my works, if God granted me the grace to publish anything more. The proposed service not having taken place, I think that on this point I am freed from my promise, and as to devoting a few pages to him it was and still is my very sincere wish.

I see you are desirous of a more direct homage, since you talk to me about a preamble either to the history of his life, or to an edition of his works. I confess this form pleases me less. It looks too much like what is commonly done; on the contrary, a mention made in virtue of a lasting impression in a publication where it is not expected, seems to me to be a graver and deeper homage, freer from pretension, and more likely to go down to posterity, if ever it should read us.

It is thus that Cicero, in his dialogues on eloquence, has paid to some of the orators of his time an illustrious tribute, which has sufficed to perpetuate their memory as well as to evoke admiration for him who outdid them. I am not a Cicero, as you may well imagine; but with all due reduction, it is not unbecoming to imitate example given by those greater than ourselves.

Scarcely had the grave closed over our dear Ozanam, when he received numerous and striking testimonies of respectful and admiring sympathy. I have seen

few, perhaps no man of our day, whose death called forth so lively an expression of public sorrow. Would you have me, after that, dictate a preface to his works or his life? This commonplace proceeding would not be worthy of him. Time is no consideration in the case of great men. The expression of the remembrance they continually keep alive, far from losing by delay, is one of the signs of great renown. A piece of praise escaping unintentionally from a moved heart, goes further in the future than panegyrics which create a sensation for the time. Such, my dear friend, are my impressions upon this subject. It appears to me to be either too late or too soon, and that the proposed form is not sufficiently dignified. We must not make a collection of mournings over this dear and illustrious deceased one. Events will one day give us an opportunity of holding him up as a pattern, of speaking out fully about him, and that will be better for him and for us than a few pages awkwardly put by us at the head of his works. There is nothing, however, to prevent you from refuting my reasons, and if you will positively have it so, I am ready to obey.

You know by my last letter that I shall be at the college of Oullins, near Lyons, on the twenty-third. I shall there await your answer, or rather your decision.

LXIII.

The Ecclesiastical Cut of the Hair.—The Priest in the World.

TOULOUSE, *June 19, 1854.*

I WILL not conceal from you, my very dear friend, that I was slightly uneasy about you. As I did not think about the Trinity retreat and the ordination, I was almost blaming your forgetfulness, while you were wholly intent upon Him who was going to do you the great favor to cut off your hair for His love. I suspect, however, that you are anything but closely cut, and that you are somewhat tenacious of your beautiful head of hair, just as when you were in the world, and used to put back gracefully the curls that fell over your forehead.

In the matter of ecclesiastical fashions for the hair, I like only the Roman one, as seen in the Holy Father himself. I mean short in front and behind, without anything to hang about and cover the ears or neck. That seems to me to be noble, grave, severe, and fine. That kind of tail or fan worn by our French priests has always seemed to me meaningless and ungraceful; and I am surprised how they cling to it, especially

when the canons tell them to keep their hair short. Your hair, my dear child, is, it is true, better proportioned, it falls gracefully and naturally without forming a kind of crest, and in this you show your taste; but it does not seem to me to gain in gravity and austerity. Look at the heads of the Roman Consuls, the ears, the brow, the neck are bare. The head appears in its natural shape, and there is nothing feminine about it. The monks have pushed this rigor still farther by shaving nearly all the head, except a crown of hair, and I confess beauty is not a gainer by it. But ought not the priest to be at least up to the looks of a consul? Compare the ecclesiastical portraits of the eighteenth, seventeenth, and sixteenth centuries; the last are severe, thin, and slightly stiff, the hair short, and everything about them looking manly.

The seventeenth century is got up in a long floating wig; the features are still noble, but the energy has diminished. We feel that there is more majesty in the costume than in the heart. As for the eighteenth, it is powdered hair, fair and rosy cheeks, and one would take priests and bishops for boys of fourteen.

The Revolution revived the true taste in the matter of hair-keeping; but our youth have again fallen into an effeminate fashion of having thick, long, and float-

ing hair ; and as for the clergy, they have adopted a fashion utterly incomprehensible in any point of view ; the only thing it can be called is a feeble remnant of a wig.

Enough about your tonsure, I hope. But it is the first step you are making in priestly gravity, and I must write to you as to a man who belongs to the Church.

I was very much touched at the impression produced upon you by the nave of Notre-Dame. It is my great country ! I always salute it as soon as I see its towers upon coming into Paris. It is more dear to me still on account of the joy it gives you.

Madame de —— has written to me about your visit. She was very much pleased with you, and I advise you to go and see her now and then. Notwithstanding her name, she is not a worldly lady ; Jesus Christ has stripped her of the pride of her birth, (a very rare thing,) and she is in the disposition of those Roman ladies whom St. Jerome gathered round him from amid the ruins of the people and the senate. You must no longer feel that kind of uneasiness you used to experience in the dwellings of the rich and great : that kind of timidity and embarrassment does not become a man who has renounced the world for Jesus Christ, and who looks upon everything with the eyes

of eternity. What is an apartment, how sumptuous soever? You must for the future look at nothing but the soul, the soul sinful or regenerated, which needs penance, or is purified in the waters of voluntary humility. A Christian presents himself before the rich and great with neither the arrogance of the demagogue, nor the cringing of the courtier; he is simple and natural, without fear, without desires, without emotion.

By the way, I forgot to tell you that I have written a lecture upon the "*Law of History*," which is to be read in the public meeting of the Academy of Legislation at Toulouse. You would never guess what is contained under that heading: *The Law of History!* I will send you a copy upon its appearance.

Adieu, my dear friend, I embrace you, your beautiful hair notwithstanding, as a soul which loves God, which God loves, and which He allows me to cherish.

LXIV.

The Beginnings of the Religious Life.

TOULOUSE, *July 27, 1854.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE date at the head of your last letter, July 4, positively frightens me. It is true I made a journey to Oullins, which took me ten days, and that on my return I found a large bundle of letters awaiting answers. Such is my excuse, if one it be. I am sure you were again giving way to the idea that you *were not loved as much as you love*, and I am really grieved at it. Do not be astonished at these little clouds of melancholy which cross your soul. One of the trials of the religious life is to live with men who are not of our own choice, and who for the most part awake in us no natural sympathy, so that we are obliged to *intimacy* without the condiment of affection which makes it sweet and agreeable.

Intimacy of life with beings of our own choice is the sweetest and most perfect thing upon earth; one which makes it like to the life of heaven. Now this you no longer enjoy. You used to closet yourself when you liked; you used to withdraw into the little

sanctuary of your heart or your cabinet ; then you came out of it at will to see or receive your friends. Now, however, neither your solitude nor your intimacy is your own. You have to be joyous when you feel inclined to sadness, to be at the service of the first-come of your brothers, of him for whom you have the least liking ; it is a perpetual thwarting of nature's yearning. Community life for the sake of Jesus Christ, and under the influence of supernatural charity, is, for this reason, the greatest miracle of Christianity. In it a man must be either unhappy or a saint. Now, you are not yet a saint, but still enough of one to accept the sacrifice whilst you feel it. Your youthful liberty still comes back to you : you think you are no longer loved as you used to be, and that is true, in this sense, that you are no longer living exclusively with people who please you and who are of your own choice. You will require time to get into it, and to love with a supernatural tenderness ; but I trust God will grant you the grace to do it, if you are faithful to His will.

I was extremely glad to hear you are *study-master*, and you deserve it richly ! Even so, you are not so badly off as those in the same position who had such hard times with you ! They were the laughing-stock of their pupils, whilst yours respect you, and

see in you the representative of our Lord. In order to be really a *study-master*, you ought to have been forced by want to take that place in one of the university colleges. That would have been a really good visitation of our good God upon your impertinence and naughtiness from fourteen to fifteen. But Providence treats you like a spoilt child.

As for myself, I too am going to take the conduct of children in a fortnight. I take possession of Sorèze upon the eighth of August, at the distribution of the prizes. I have, however, met from the scholars and every one else with a reception which betokens an easy and happy administration. I am overjoyed at leaving the world to live with children and young men. We can at least flatter ourselves we shall find some among them good, firm, and generous, and if it be an illusion, it is still preferable to the pain of the reality.

You have probably received my lecture at the Academy of Legislation. You see I did not talk about the Romans as much as you expected, and that I did talk a little about things you did not expect at all. You now have the broad lines of my convictions upon our epoch and the future. I hope you liked it, and that my dear little friend recognized his own heart in mine.

LXV.

The School of Soreze.—The Thought of Death.

SOREZE, *August 21, 1854.*

I HAVE just read your two letters for the second time, my dear friend, and am really delighted at them. I think you are beginning to love me a little, and to tell me so with heartiness and simplicity. If you but knew the joy it gives me! I cannot describe it to you. In order to do that, I should have to become twenty or twenty-five again, the age at which everything allows you to say all.

Now I am shackled, and tell or send you but a faint shadow of what I feel.

You would never guess my present life. In the first place we have two days public exercises. I presided at gymnastic contests, fencing-matches, racing, dramatic performances, and I don't know how many things I had not yet seen, and which appeared to me very attractive, and above all touching. I compared the first years of my youth with this splendid playground, this music, these fountains, the free look which surrounded me on all sides, and I envied the

lot of these youths whom I saw ripening amid so many beauties. On the morrow everything was deserted. There remained but a few boys lost in the immensity of their dwelling.

The first thing I did was to get two hundred feet of timber felled in the park. I always begin with this, no matter where I be, provided I am master. If ever France chose me for her king, not an impossibility two hundred years hence, I think my first decree would be for the felling of two or three millions of trees on the soil of our dear country. This is owing to a certain love of order, of simplicity and symmetry, which makes me uncomfortable in a badly laid-out place; and I remark, in the majority of the gardens which come under my notice, that their great defect is being over-stocked. It is the same with writing.

But let us return to my life at Soreze. The trees felled, I made a general visitation of the house, and ordered a host of repairs, from the putting up of pilasters in the chapel, to the clearing away of cobwebs from the windows and ceilings. I cannot bear, in a house where I live, a disorderly spot, even were it a hundred feet under ground. Consequently every one is as busy as he can be, and I am getting a prodigious name for seeing everything, and prying into

holes and corners unknown to the generations who preceded me. Add to this meetings every day, to draw up the plan of our studies and discipline, and you will know tolerably well what I am doing, and what I am far from you.

Far from you! do you hear? far from you by the poor material part; for there is one which never leaves you.

To come to serious topics, I don't approve of your abandoning yourself to the idea of death through melancholy. Nothing certainly is more beautiful than to die, after having known all one can know here below, God, His Christ, and His Church; but this thought must not come from the dark side of the soul; it must come from the brighter and more serene side, just as the sun rises out of the east. To die! To bare one's neck, lay one's head on a block in presence of God, then feel it fall for truth and justice, is the greatest destiny here below. Even the ancients knew this: how much more we who have seen Jesus Christ die? You will observe, too, that He Himself considered death too beautiful and sweet in itself; He clothed it with the garb of suffering and opprobrium. That is why to desire simply the charming death of the scaffold, is to love it after the fashion of the great men of antiquity, and not like Christians. There-

fore do not think thus any more ; our death is the death of the cross ; we must carry it daily, like a freed bondsman who follows his master out of love. Doubtless, no one of us, even the man of the tenderest and most heroic desires, is sure to be strong enough to suffer : but this is God's business, we have nothing to do with it. We must throw ourselves, weak as we are, into the horror of death, and leave to God, should the day come, the care of making us what we would wish to be.

I say to you, then, with St. Paul, "*Gaudete.*" Will Soreze never see you? Will you never come and see its beeches and sycamores two hundred years old, drink its flowing waters, climb its mountains, dive into its valleys? I don't press you, it would be too great a temptation for you if you did see it! I confine myself to embracing you as well as I can, and that is with tenderness.

LXVI.

A Monk on Horseback.—Souls the Final Enjoyment.

SOREZE, *October 4, 1854.*

I WAS under the impression, my dear friend, that you would have been somewhat pained during our interview at Oullins, because I was myself interiorly pained at having seen so little of you. I was only there two days; I had to hold councils, examine the vocation of five postulants, and receive those with whom I had made engagements. This thoroughly explained my seeing so little of you, but it was not therefore the less painful either in your case or my own. Nothing is harder than duty in conflict with affection, for duty must carry the day. But perhaps I did not tell you sufficiently how much it cost me. I sometimes hurt others unintentionally, because I do not happen to know that a thought or a circumstance is unremarked by them. But now I am a hundred times freer than then. The provincial chapter went off well; a good choice has been made of my successor, and I am at last relieved of the enormous burden which has been weighing upon me for the last fifteen years.

This restoration of the Friars Preachers in France was at bottom a desperate undertaking; one would have thought I should have gone to the wall in it. Instead of that, God opened up the way, threw down obstacles, fed, lodged, and provided for us, gave us a few really saintly religious, and numbers of others solidly virtuous, a few preachers who have done good; He preserved concord among us, and in giving up my post, I have the consolation to leave everything in good order.

As for you, my dearest child, who ride in the forest of Compiègne, and take it as a matter of course, I have nothing to say to you. A priest can undoubtedly go on horseback in the exercise of his ministry. There are mountainous countries in which it is the only means of travelling, and even bishops make no difficulty about traversing the rugged portions of their diocese in this manner. But to ride for mere amusement, like the sons of the wealthy, who spend the afternoon in the Bois de Boulogne, does certainly seem to me somewhat bold in a religious. The horse inspires pride; riding is a luxury; do you think that Jesus Christ, who entered Jerusalem upon an ass, would have been pleased to see you on horseback? Not that an ecclesiastic might not be able to ride properly; but do you think you would wear a scarlet

coat with gold braid, supposing that were still the fashion in France? Would your heart be unmoved at the thought of your being dressed like the wealthy and the great of this world? When M. de Rancé turned from his evil ways, he sold his horses and carriages, laid aside the magnificent clothes he used to wear, and covered with mourning a body which he had long given over to sin. Is not this the act of a recollected and penitent soul? Do you think now that a young unbeliever, who saw you on horseback, would be tempted in the evening to throw himself at your feet, and lay open to you the wounds of his heart? I do not think so. A man on horseback is too high up for another to kneel down to him. We must humble ourselves if we would have others humble. It is related in the life of one of our saints that one day he was going through a town on horseback with his friends; God, who wanted to make him His own, threw him down into the mud, and this was the occasion of his salvation and his sanctity.

I am of your opinion about mountains, the sea, and forests; they are the three great things in nature, and have many analogies, especially the sea and forests. I am as fond as yourself of them; but as old age creeps on, nature takes less hold upon us than souls; and we feel the beauty of the saying of Vau-

venargues, "*Sooner or later we enjoy only souls.*" This is why we can always love and be loved. Old age, which withers the body, gives the soul a second youth if she be not corrupted and forgetful of herself, and the moment of death is that of the blossoming of our mind.

One thing is however certain, and that is, that if I had found you in the forest of Compiègne, upon your horse, I think I should have given you a sound dozen with the whip, in my capacity of father and friend; this, however, does not prevent me from embracing you very tenderly.



LXVII.

Upon Hopes in Sickness.

SOREZE, *October 25, 1854.*

YOUR letter, my dear friend, brought me grievous news. I felt in my own chest the stroke which has lighted upon yours. The worst thing possible, however, in your position, would be to give way to despondency. Despondency is a deadly feeling, even for those in good health; how much more so for those whose health is impaired! The best thing we can do

when we are hit hard, is to take heart in proportion to the weight of the blow. I have gone through a great deal in my lifetime; more than once I have been upon the brink of a dark precipice. Now, nothing was of greater use to me on these occasions than a sort of sudden energy which has given me, how I knew not, and which, despite the weak and melancholy side of my nature, raised me above myself at the very time I was most likely to succumb.

It is evident that God is marking out a limit for you. Neither you nor myself know why; but what is certain is, that God is good, that He loves you, and that He has His designs. We must take them for what they are, without being able to unravel them, and accept them with submission. This done, and all impatience being discarded as a weakness, you must look out for the means of getting over it.

I know a lady, about as big as a lark, who, one fine day, about fifteen years ago, met with what has just befallen yourself. The blood burst from her throat: half her lungs disappeared, and she imagined she had only a couple of days to live. Now this lady is still alive, she is active, strong, and courageous, almost a saint, instead of being the thin, wan little creature she formerly was. Everything about her has felt the influence of her change. Her father was

an infidel: he is now a believer: her daughter is walking in the mother's footsteps; her uncle, an old veteran who had forgotten God, has returned to Him, and serves Mass at seventy like a chorister. A virtue from on high has spread around this woman, and as she is obliged every winter to pass six months in the south, she has become for a great number of souls the centre of a supernatural warmth. Have you never read such things in the lives of the saints? Have you not heard of some who were dying for a quarter of a century, and who drew from this living death a prodigious activity for good? God makes use of death as well as of life. The weaker the instruments the greater the amount of His own strength and glory He lends them.

I have often talked to you about death and the necessity of despising it. We must now think about life. You will survive me. If I deserve a few pages to be written about me, you will write them. Meditation and writing do not require any very great amount of physical strength. Even supposing God did not give you the strength necessary for the ministry of preaching, you would still have another kind and be strong enough to enable you to turn your life to some purpose.

Such, my dear friend, in a few words, are the

thoughts suggested to me by your mishap and the state it has thrown you into. I pray our Lord to strengthen you, He alone can do it. Friendship itself is powerless against great pain. Adieu, promise me to take heart, and know that I should be very unhappy at the thought of your being so.

LXVIII.

Ozanam's Works.

SOREZE, *January 13, 1855.*

SIR,

I AM very happy to have afforded you a few moments' consolation, by the very imperfect tribute paid to the memory of our common friend, and I would willingly undertake a notice of his works in the *Correspondant*. But your letter would give me to understand that they will appear in single volumes. This would make the task of speaking of the whole a difficult one, and might take away from their success. People do not like reading isolated volumes which come out at intervals. There would be greater advantage, I would even say grandeur, in their appearing all together. The volumes might be sent me as they appeared: I would study them; then at

the moment of the final publication my notice would be itself printed.

Such is the plan I would propose. Otherwise I should be obliged to wait until the last volume had appeared, which would necessitate great delay, and my work would thereby labor under the disadvantage of appearing to be written too late. I should be obliged to you if you would consider this, consult the family and friends of our dear departed friend, and let me know, at your earliest convenience, the decision come to. In itself, the matter is indifferent to me, and I do not make it a condition of my personal dispositions.

Whatever the case be, I shall be happy to contribute, if I can, to the glory of one of the greatest minds and noblest characters which the Church of France has brought forth in our age.

Pray accept, Sir, the expression of my high esteem and cordial devotedness.

LXIX.

Pseudonyms.—Literary Criticism.—Moderation in Study.

SOREZE, *May* 11, 1855.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE a mountain of reproaches for you. First, your signature at the end of your letter is simply hieroglyphic: that is excusable only in business-men who are afraid of being robbed if they write their names plainly. Then your article was signed with a borrowed name, *which is simply horrible*. A man ought never to write anything without signing it, and avoid above everything the pseudonym. When a man cannot put his name to a publication, it is an infallible sign that he ought not to have written it, and that it should not be published. You have already published a great deal without your signature; I am determined not to forgive you this crime; the more so as you have no reason for concealing yourself. If your youth does not allow you to tell your readers who you are, why do you get readers?

Your article pleased me very much: it was graceful and touching, qualities which I discovered during

Holy Week in M. de Melun's work, who had the kindness to send it to me. I receive from time to time these marks of remembrance, but none charm me so much as yours.

I was hoping to see you at Soreze very soon, and lo and behold! you put me off till the month of September, when our halls will be empty. Fortunately nature and autumn will not be gone. I shall expect you then at that time, but don't fail then, at least. Alas! it is so rare a thing to have to offer hospitality to those we love! I ought to be offering you nothing but a poor little cell, and in that case, your health would not allow you to live with me; but God has allowed me to be able to give you quarters in a palace where you will have splendid air, lovely streams, cool shade, food suited to your state of health, in fact, all that one of the great ones of the earth could offer you in his castle. Fortunately, it is God's will which has driven me here in spite of myself, otherwise I really don't know what would happen me in the next world.

I have received the first five volumes of Ozanam's works; I have only to get *Dante* and the two volumes of *Melanges*. But as I read *Dante* some time back, I am (in fact) waiting only for the *Melanges*.

I shall be unable to finish my work without having read them, for I want to become thoroughly acquainted

with that beautiful mind. I have already finished reading and noting the first volume of *La Civilization au Cinquième Siècle*, and I am delighted with it.

It is true, one sees a difference between the first lessons which he corrected, and those of which we only have the short-hand copy, but it is all fine, full of ideas and dash, sound in point of learning, and backed up by real eloquence. I consider these lessons superior to those of M. M., even setting aside the question of truthfulness; at least they sustain the comparison with advantage. There is more soul in them, and consequently more eloquence.

Let me hear about your health. Does the improvement still continue? Are you any stronger? Have you the courage to do nothing, to walk about, to sleep well? If you but knew how useful it is in life to lose time properly. Look at Ozanam. What a difference, if instead of forcing life like he did, he had slept eight hours a day, and worked but six, he would be still alive, he would still have thirty years before him, that is to say, six hours work, multiplied by three hundred and sixty-five days, and this multiplied by thirty. I don't know whether in my case it is laziness or human calculation, but with exception of those very rare cases in which a thing must be completed at any price, I have a horror of hurrying and

going against the natural distribution of things. Every day brings its work and its rest in happy succession; they both tend to make each other enjoyable, and the soul, ever active, ripens in perpetual youth. I sometimes fancy this is self-indulgence, and yet look where the contrary system leads to.

Are you quite sure that when you give way to your intense ardor, that you do so for God, and not through an unavowed desire to be some one, and to write?

Pride is very ingenious, as is also, I must allow, the pleasure of taking things easily. God, knowing this, has prepared thorns for every combination, and by trying to escape the one, we come upon the others.

Adieu, my dear friend, I do not tell you how much I love you. I am becoming more and more fearful of expressing what I feel, but do not let the coldness of my style deceive you. My style is like my manner; it sometimes seems icy because sadness or doubt come upon me at the moment when I am other at heart. Adieu.

LXX.

Conduct of a Young Ecclesiastic in Time of Revolution.—The Virtue of Silence.

SOREZE, *October 26, 1855.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I DO not think you ought to make any difficulty about laying aside the clerical dress if grave events should overtake you in Italy. You have no post there, no duty of representing the Church binds you, and besides, in that country questions are so complicated with matters foreign to religion, that it would be difficult to say for what cause one would die. During our first revolution the most virtuous and heroic priests made no difficulty about laying aside the marks of their priesthood, and no one ever thought of blaming them for it. I was told that in 1848 a respectable-looking old man, upon meeting an ecclesiastic in his dress, said to him, "Sir, when a man has the honor to wear a dress like yours, he ought not to expose it lightly to the outrages of the crowd." This saying struck me. It seemed to me just, and I think that by taking it for the rule of your conduct, should things require it, you will do well before God and men.

With regard to expressing your opinions upon political and religious matters, you ought to be extremely reserved, and not communicate them even to honorable men who would seem to open their hearts to you.

Italy is a prey to unheard-of agitation, and a word, which in France would be harmless, might cause more than inconvenience. You must learn in these days to be reserved. Frankness does not require you to betray yourself. It is one thing to lie, and another to be silent. Silence is a great virtue. It is only cowardly when honor obliges us to break it; and honor does not oblige us to this in conversations where we give vent to our opinions for the simple pleasure of doing so. I, perhaps more than most men, have expressed my opinion loudly, and frequently to no purpose; but by God's grace I ordinarily observed great moderation in my way of expressing it. I never like to hurt any one, and that is why I have passed through many dangers without doing myself overmuch damage. Reserve in our opinions, or at least in the manner of putting them, is a prudence in which there is more heroism than in the hasty expression of our personal feelings. Charity in the Christian is an unction which softens many things; and which in softening them brings them nearer the calm resort of truth.

I trust, my dear friend, that your stay at Pisa will do you good. Keep your own interior ; walk about ; read old books out of the reach of your storms ; pray to God, think of me, and be sure that I will never forget you a single day of my life.



LXXI.

Sickness in Exile.—The Gift of Faith.

SOREZE, *November 15, 1855.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE fit of melancholy you experienced upon setting foot in a strange land did not surprise me. When a man travels in foreign countries through curiosity, rapidly, or for some ends which interests and occupies him, he can easily put up with absence from his native land. The case is not the same when he goes there sick, to stay in one place without knowing what will happen him, nor how long he will have to stay.

This is a prospect which produces a very painful impression, and in no way compensates for the absence of his family, his friends, and a certain something which makes his native clime, however sad, sweeter than any other. This is why I should have

preferred your not leaving France. Hyères offered everything needful for your recovery. But since the step is taken, you must get the upper hand, and fight stoutly against home-sickness. God will help you, if you ask Him, and my memory, although a very small thing beside that of God, will contribute its share.

Your visit to the military hospital in order to overcome your grief, charmed me. You are quite right. It is the sight of great sufferings which shows us most clearly our own ingratitude to God. For, what are our misfortunes in comparison with those suffered by so many other men in body and mind? We have the faith. How priceless is not even this single gift! In proportion as I get to know men, I cannot tell you the effect produced upon me by this thought, I have the faith! The Epistles of St. Paul, which I read with greater pleasure every day, make me more and more enamored of truth. It is an ocean of which God is the shore.

Adieu, my very dear friend, do not forget me in your exile, as I shall not forget you, however distant you may be. I am wrong to say you are distant since you inhabit the place nearest myself.

LXXII.

God's Will.

SOREZE, *January 3, 1856.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR letter of the fifth of December was reproving me from my portfolio, when that of the twenty-sixth came to fill up the measure of my ingratitude. Notwithstanding, therefore, all the work of the beginning of a year, I cannot forego the pleasure of writing a few lines to you to embrace you.

How delightfully simple, artless, innocent, and everything else you are to talk to me about writing more books! It is quite evident you are not at the mercy of two hundred scholars who have a right to walk into your room from morning till night for very important trifles, and then to force upon you, at the moment you least expect it, a grave, a very grave case, which tortures you to know whether to be firm or lenient, terrible or kind. Let me inform you, Sir Laid-up, that I have never known how to do two things at a time, and that is precisely the reason of my being in good health without having to lose my time. If I were to do what you say, I should write

a very imperfect book, and have a college still worse than the book.

But then, you will say, years are stealing by, your hair is growing gray. That is true, and it would really weigh on my mind if my own will had brought me here. As I am certain that it is God's will I should be here, I abandon myself to His adorable guidance, leaving to Him my years for what they are worth, and my projects for what they are worth too. Doubtless if I were my own master, I should immediately shut myself up and take part in the great religious and political questions of the day, but God has not so willed it. Since 1830, just a quarter of a century ago, my life has been a continual torment, without leisure, without a distinct horizon, without connection, almost without country. I have been driven forward like a leaf by the wind, and I am so accustomed to this, that Soreze, where I should like to die, seems to me but a tent for a day. God will tear me away from it as He has done from all the rest, and it is not probable that He will do so in order to let me write in peace in a room of my own choice.

Don't press me, then, either to write or to love you. The former I can't do, the latter I do.

I think you read the *Correspondant*. M. de Montalembert has published a remarkable and courageous

article on England, in two parts. Things are getting better defined. The world will at least know that all Catholics are not hostile to nature, liberty, and antiquity.

I embrace you and love you like a son and a friend.



LXXIII.

On Kindness and Firmness in Education.

SIR,

THE advice you ask me for in your letter is already written in your heart as a father and a Christian. In education two things are necessary, kindness and firmness. We must avoid both the idolatry which forgives everything and pets everything, as well as the severity which, when unremitting, repels and hardens the heart. In our times, the besetting sin in education is softness. Formerly people were perhaps more severe than was needful; to-day they are not severe enough. I think it desirable not to keep a child too long under the enervating shadow of home. At seven years of age princes used to be handed over from governesses to a tutor.

This is about the age at which a child ought to be weaned from the comforts of family life, to be trained

under masters and with equals to letters and the trials of life. Up to that point it is the business of the mother to fashion his soul to kindness, confidence, and piety, indelible traces which she only with the help of God can engrave upon it.

These are, Sir, very simple commonplace truths, but a feeling of kindness which I appreciate has prompted you to listen to them from me. Allow me to thank you kindly for it, and accept the very high consideration with which I have the honor to be,

Your very humble obedient servant.



LXXIV

Sufficient for the Day is the Evil Thereof.

SOREZE, *February 7, 1856.*

I DID not know, my dear friend, what had become of you. Your letter informs me you are at Rome. You did well to leave Pisa if the air did not agree with you; but I am doubtful whether that of Rome will agree with you, at least during the summer, which has always appeared to me intolerable in that city. Moreover, it is very difficult in Rome, in the midst of strangers, to keep one's peace of body and

soul. One is obliged to see, to talk a great deal, to exhaust one's self. Perhaps this quiet is what you are looking for by an instinct which you cannot define. You require, besides nature and books, the charm of conversation, the noise of ideas. But time will tell whether Rome agrees as well with your body as with your heart. All that I ask you is not to go in the teeth of evidence, and to come back to us as soon as it is clear that Italy is unfavorable to you.

You are extremely kind to talk to me about the book you would like to see me writing.* In the meantime here is a little news; I have promised the *Correspondant* my eight unpublished Conferences at Toulouse. You know that this was the beginning of the moral doctrine.

The first will appear on the 25th of March and so on, every two months. So you see this is at least something. I do not know when the rest will come. You talk very comfortably about my leisure. But if you only knew the perpetual cares which surround me! Great works are not the only ones which kill time; a constant succession of little ones does it perhaps more effectually. How many hours taken up by letters, interviews, trifles! How many others given up to thinking and planning! Then contra-

* Lettres à un jeune homme sur la vie Chrétienne,

dictions which put us out, deceptions which try us. Be assured, my dear friend, that I have got a tolerable burden, and that it would be really difficult for me to carry another on top of it.

To write for God in my cabinet, is undoubtedly a dream capable of touching me. But shall I ever get this time of rest in the midst of quiet and useful action? I don't know. My poor life is going as it came. It is no use talking to me about my youth. I have still a certain amount of vigor left, it is true, and judging by the ordinary run of things, a few years before me; but they will soon be at an end, and probably before I am able to do what you want me.

Write to me soon, give me plenty of news about yourself, and allow me to tell you that I love you.



LXXV.

Party Violence.—Peace in God.

SOREZE, *March 31, 1856.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOU did well to draw up. The subject handled by you is a delicate one, at least in the form adopted by you. You have time before you; have patience and know how to wait for the time when

you will be freer and more master of your thought. What you have seen around you is but the usual sight afforded by the world. Even formerly persecution of unrelished views was much worse than to-day ; cabal and party-men had means at their disposal which they have no longer. Now they can scarcely do more than insult and calumniate.

By the way, don't admire me for keeping quiet at the attacks made upon what I said of Ozanam's share in the foundation of the society of St. Vincent of Paul ; these attacks are unknown to me, or at least I only know them by the answers made to them. The *Gazette de Lyons* has lately published several articles in favor of the truth ; and I have had sent to me the original of a declaration signed by the members of the first Paris conference, at St. Etienne du Mont, in default of the four first companions of Ozanam still living. These four keep silent, whether it be that their antecedents oblige them, or that they are unwilling to assume the title of founders with Ozanam.

I told you then that my silence was not very meritorious, since I did not know of the attacks. This is not haughtiness on my part. Were I in presence of adversaries whom I thought honest, and whose opinion I valued, I should consider it my duty to answer and explain. But when I see men trample upon a beloved

and venerated tomb, because the great servant of God whose remains lie there did not share the apostasy and fury of our pretended champions of the Church, I do not feel even contempt: *I look and pass on*, according to Dante's advice.

Late events have thoroughly disenchanted me with this world and its opinions; I live solely in the future and in eternity. It is there that disappears all the empty anger of parties, there that we get strength enough not even to think of them. When the traveller crosses the Alps, there is a moment when the first breezes from Italy bespeak the neighborhood of that great and lovely land; he stops to inhale their perfumes, and forgets the chilly blasts he has left behind. Oh, how good God is to those who seek Him alone! Endeavor, my dear child, to live in this region, to become very calm in it, not to fall asleep in a deceitful peace, but to gain there the strength which knows how to wait, which believes and combats. Watch your words carefully; do not multiply your connections. Rome is a tomb, the tomb of the martyrs, we must know how to hide ourselves in it. Whilst there, I never saw any one but the Pope, every one else was a stranger to me. It was solitude which saved me from my enemies—she is still to-day my asylum.

Adieu, my dear friend, the fine weather is coming,

I hope you will come to Sorèze to get your two *studies*, and the effusions which my heart has always in store for you.

LXXVI.

“*Nolite Judicare.*”—Evangelical Sweetness.

SOREZE, *August 24, 1856.*

I AM very much pleased with what you tell me touching your relations with M. X. You see how cautious we must be in judging souls, and how well borne out is that saying of our Lord, “*Nolite judicare.*” We priests who have to do with souls, and know their secrets, cannot be like worldly people whose judgments are so ready and so cruel. You have yourself seen a soul which you judged disadvantageously. You thought it was returning to God, or at least moved by His grace, and appreciated properly the conduct of those who, instead of encouraging it, sated it with bitterness and outrages.

This will be a lasting lesson for you, my dear friend. It will teach you the value of that kindness of heart which looks at good rather than bad qualities, which conceives hopes more readily than fears, and which instead of irritating wounds, heals them

with the oil of the good Samaritan. One of my sweetest consolations on the decline of my career is the certainty of never having insulted or galled any one even whilst defending the truth energetically and passionately. I scarcely remember ever having been hard, except in the case of a few contemporary princes, and even so, I think the frightful persecutions carried on by Russia, Holland, and other countries, against our brethren, justified me. Open persecutors have not, doubtless, a right to the same gentle treatment as other stray souls; and I am certain that among our contemporaries the conversion of no one will have been endangered or retarded through my fault.

Your *two roses* appeared lovely to me. I have put them into a little corner where there are very few things, and things which I value highly.

Adieu, my very dear friend, I embrace and love you.

LXXVII.

Attention to Health. — Five Propositions Relative to the French Academy.

SOREZE, *November 10, 1856.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR letter informed me of your departure for Rome, and now you are awaiting my rather backward answer there. Here it is.

Let me first of all tell you that I am delighted at the good news you give me of your health. You are better, what a consolation! How glad I should be to see you with that vigor which God has given me! But be it said for your consolation that I was not always so. Time was when I was very delicate, very pale, and quite unable to walk about the streets of Paris. It is the continuance of a regular life, made up of work, journeying, and rest, which has brought me to my present state of health, not forgetting a delightful illness which, when I was thirty-nine, cleared me of an old leaven which was doubtless working in my body. Let me beg of you, then, to get into a uniform, simple, and calm way of living. Never work at night, sleep well. There is no use in

killing one's self writing instead of securing seventy years of a well employed life. It is perfectly astounding what may be done with time, if we have patience enough to wait and not hurry.

I am very much obliged to M. Ampère for thinking of me. I have already been spoken to about the French academy. I did not decline these overtures, because it seems to me that religion would gain by having, if possible, a monk in the first literary body in the world.

This same feeling, as well as that of civic duty, made me accept a seat in the constituent Assembly; and notwithstanding my being obliged, as the position was a false one, to resign it, still I never repented having taken place for a moment in presence of the revolution. Neither do our rules forbid the acceptance of literary honors, and I do not think our most Reverend General would refuse me the authorization I should require from him. All this, be it well understood, arises from no preconceived shifts or desires. I only think of the academy at the moment it is mentioned to me.

Our centenary will take place on Wednesday, 11th of April next. I hope, my dear friend, you will manage matters so as to be at it. You are down upon the list among the friends of the school. We

shall keep a room for you, as well as for all our guests who come from a distance. You will receive in due time the official invitation, and later on the programme of the festival, if you accept it.

I laughed heartily at your taunt about my administrative gruffness. Write frequently to me, without being intimidated by my magistral position, and rest assured that I love you like a simple mortal.



LXXVIII.

Upon the Death of a Soreze Pupil.

SOREZE, *March 17, 1857.*

SIR,

SINCE the misfortune which has fallen both upon you and us, I have frequently thought of writing to you. But, each time, I felt my powerlessness to console a father in so great and lawful a grief, and I preferred not to open anew, by my letter, so fresh a wound. Still, I venture to do so, and to tell you how deeply I felt the stroke which deprived you of a son, and us of a well-loved pupil. I may even say that I never experienced deeper or more heartfelt emotion; and every time I picture to myself that

dear child upon his death-bed, I again feel my heart give way. He was the first pupil snatched from me by death, and I could scarcely have believed that between them and us the bonds were so strong. It is true that this poor young man was under my spiritual direction, and that by this confidential intimacy he had obtained a greater place in my heart. You had formed in him a really Christian soul, even more so than I thought. His faith and piety during that sorrowful passage were extraordinary, and God sustained him during it by an intervention of His grace, so to speak, visible.

This must be to you, Sir, not only a subject of hope, but of certainty, and at the same time a powerful consolation. For when one knows life and all its perils, it is a difficult thing to promise one's self that a young man will come safely out of them, and that he will always carry before God, on his death, a safe and peaceful conscience.

To die young and spotless is one of God's graces. Reason does not tell us so; but faith does, and yours is great enough to understand this language. I hope, therefore, that it will give you the victory in this trial, and that you will receive upon the head of your second son the blessing of the first and the merit of his death.

LXXIX.

Live in the Future.

DEAR FRIEND,

YOU are good and amiable in all you tell me. I should be glad to see you every day, and I can scarcely get a look at you once a year. God, who united us, has separated us, and I do not know whether He will ever again bring us together for good and all.

This trial in which we are may be a long one, and if any sudden event brings us out of it, no one can say what the result may be. France and Europe are too far from Jesus Christ, the living stone, to effect anything lasting. Where Christ is not believed in, faith is weak, vacillating, without foundation. Now we cannot hope that this divine faith will suddenly regain its ground. The greatest catastrophes move men for a moment, nations lift their head, they look around and listen, then sink again, at the first glimpse of peace, into listlessness of soul. We must then make up our minds to look upon the present as lost and think of the future. The future, however distant, is still humanity, and a finer field, because re-

quiring more foresight and faith. When I read one of the beautiful pages of antiquity, I admire the power of man at such a distance from himself. Jerusalem, Athens, Plato, Cicero, still move us, and although every one cannot pretend to write immortal things, a man can at least leave his bones on the good side. The soul, moreover, sees and acts from on high ; she leaves her traces, how faint soever, in the events which arise from century to century, and if she be prepared to help them on the side of truth and justice, she enjoys it as a work in which she has an eternal share.

Live then in the future ; it is the great asylum, and the great lever. How long did not and does not God live in it ? I will therefore make an appointment in it with you for the eleventh of August, and embrace you tenderly.

LXXX.

To a Pupil of the School of Soreze.

SOREZE, *August 24, 1857.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I DID, in fact, pass close to your place, and I was tempted to go and see you, but I was in a hurry and with friends, and I confined myself to giving a look at your house. It was but little, but it was, notwithstanding, a serious and cordial remembrance. So you have launched out into the world; the only link between you and your youthful days is the memory of the past. I trust its fruits will not perish in you, that you will remain a firm Christian, and that you will never forget the master who urged you on to good. For my part, my dear friend, I shall always remember the days we passed together, and the consolation you afforded me in a new and difficult career. I remain sincerely attached to you, whether you remain in the world, or whether your vocation become stronger and lead you back to me by another road.

I have but one wish in this regard; it is that you may clearly know the will of God, and have the courage to follow it, whatever it may be. Adieu, I em-

brace you and renew the expression of my affection for you.



LXXXI.

Against Ennui and Sadness.—To a Pupil
of Soreze.

SOREZE, *November 2, 1857.*

MY VERY DEAR CHILD,

YOUR letter crossed mine, which you must have already received. Your first word was a sad one, and that is natural. I never changed quarters in my life without experiencing great depression of spirits. Besides, neither the past nor the future attach you to your new life. You have adopted it out of obedience and not conviction; whilst at Soreze your memories, your affections and plans kept your heart always warm, and naturally prevented the days from feeling heavy. But, my dear child, you will not give way to these first impressions. You must set to work in good earnest, and give yourself more than ever to God. This is the resting-place of every man, but yours especially, since you have received in a greater degree than others the gift of knowing and loving the things of the invisible and eternal order. After having been your consolation at Soreze, God must be your

strength in your new position. Read assiduously the Gospel, the Acts and Epistles of the Apostles. You will find there, in the long run, a delicious bread which will give you a distaste for all others. Think, too, of me, who will never cease to love you.



LXXXII.

Advice to a Young Man upon Paris Life.

SIR AND DEAR FORMER PUPIL,

I HAVE handed over to the institute of Sorèze your request to be admitted as a member of the Sorèze association. It took your request into consideration in its capacity of *Central Committee of the Association*, and elected you. The notification will shortly be forwarded to you. I was pleased at this mark of your attachment to the school, and trust that some day it will again see you within its walls.

Since you ask me for advice on occasion of your shortly going to Paris, I send you the following. I should recommend you first of all to go and see the Rev. Father Chocarne, who was at one time your chaplain. He is at present prior of our Paris Convent, near the Luxembourg, and would be very glad to see you. The first thing every Christian ought to

have, wherever he may be, is a father, a master, a spiritual friend. This is the first thing you have to find. You want a heart devoted to you, and able to keep you in the right path. In the second place you must have the society of young men of your own age. Chance may throw you in the way of a good set, just as it may throw you into company unworthy of you.

By becoming a member of a Division of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, you will be sure to be right. There is also near our convent a society of students, called the *Cercle Catholique*, where, if you become a member, you would find a library, rooms for amusement and conversation, and every kind of help towards passing your leisure time agreeably and virtuously.

If you think proper, Father Chocarne could introduce you to the president of the Society. I should write to him myself, if the religious I have just mentioned were not a representative of my affection, who will do all I should have done myself.

Such, my dear friend, is my advice. If you follow it, you will cling fast to the good principles you imbibed at the school of Soreze, and these principles, by fencing in your morals, and strengthening your character, will enable you to escape the perils of the liberty upon which you are about to enter.

If you issue from those dangers faithful, good and religious, your whole life will benefit by it ; you will be thoroughly grounded in the principles of truth and honor. Alas ! how many young men like you perish without wishing it, from weakness which did not know where to look for support, which enjoyment increased, and which having become by habit a second nature, leaves them no last resource but those immense graces which God sometimes grants at the hour of death. I trust this will not be your case. You will struggle against yourself ; you will remember your Soreze days, my affection for you, and I shall some day find you what I hope you will be.

I commend you to God, your best friend, and renew to you the expression of my devoted affection.



LXXXIII.

Education.—Protestantism.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE received your three letters. As you have been informed, our retreat went off very well, and I have never yet seen so beautiful a general communion. Many of the old pupils, hitherto considered

the worst, have been completely changed. This is not the first time, thank God, that I have witnessed these metamorphoses, which proves to me how very slow we must be in despairing of a pupil and of branding him as incorrigible. So long as his expulsion is not absolutely necessary, he ought to be kept, watched over, and prayed for. The greatest consolation of masters is precisely the conversion of the bad, just as the greatest consolation of God is, according to the Gospel, the return of sinners.

You now see clearly the results of an education different from the one you have yourself received; the absolute want not only of religion, but of elevated ideas, an abject materialism, and a nameless degradation of mind. You must not be astonished if you meet with young Protestants whose faith and mind are in better condition. There are sincere Protestants, just as well as good Catholics. It is probable that those of whom you speak have been brought up in their families, or under preserving influences, just as you yourself were. It may be that, humanly speaking, the Protestant faith is easier to keep than our own, precisely because it is in great part *human*, and requires of nature but tiny sacrifices outside the common moral law.

This is undoubtedly one of the things which upholds

Protestantism. It gives religion in *small doses*. This suits minds for which reason is not enough, and real faith a great deal too much.



LXXXIV.

Upon Father De Ravignan.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

M. DE MONTALEMBERT had already given me the same hint as yourself on occasion of Father de Ravignan's death; and when your letter came to hand, my pages were just starting for Paris. Consequently you may make your mind easy; it is done, and that with hearty good will. I had no constant intercourse with Father de Ravignan, but I was always happy to see him. Besides, we really belonged not only to the same pulpit, but to the same sphere of action, notwithstanding the shades which always distinguish men one from another.

He is a very great loss, although the state of his health did not allow him to act up to the intensity of his zeal. Our ranks are daily thinning; those ranks of the second period of the nineteenth century, in which we have won the freedom of the religious life,

and freedom of education. A third period has begun ; God alone knows what it will be, and what men He will give us for His work !

M. de Montalembert had spoken to me about the words used by Mgr. the Bishop of Orleans. I thank you for mentioning them to me. Had it not been for you, I should probably not have heard them, or at least have heard them too late : I have written to thank him.

My editor is binding a copy of my works for the Holy Father. I intend sending them, with a letter, through the Paris Nunciature, unless you know a better way. It seems to me the simplest and the most usual for all kinds of communications.

The young man of my *Lettres sur la Vie Chretienne* will be called Emmanuel ; it is a scriptural name, and seemed to me a fitting one. It is moreover that of a young man who has just left Sorèze, to whom I was attached on account of his piety and good temper.

Adieu, my dear friend, I embrace you tenderly in Him whom we both serve.

LXXXV.

Literary Masterpieces.—To a Pupil of Soreze.

SOREZE, *June 25, 1858.*

YOUR short stay at the school, a month ago, gave me great consolation. I forgot all that had ever given me pain, and am persuaded of the uprightness and goodness of your heart. I highly approve of your intention of collecting the masterpieces of our language; it would do you no harm to add to them one or two Latin authors, for instance, Virgil and Tacitus, and a few of Cicero's treatises. The reading of literary masterpieces not only forms the taste, it keeps the soul in elevated regions, and prevents it from sinking down into the vulgarity of mere material and gentlemanly occupations. Every remarkable man has been fond of letters.

The reading of the Bible will be very advantageous to you, and I strongly recommend it.

You did not mention anything about your positive practices of religion. You must have a regular time for your confessions and communions, and in general for all your religious practices, of what nature soever. Regularity and perseverance alone produce lasting results.

Adieu, my dear friend, pray for me. Do not forget the graces God has given you, and believe me yours most cordially devoted.



LXXXVI.

Upon the Choice of a Friend.

SOREZE, *July 13, 1858.*

MY DEAR CHILD,

I DON'T see anything in the way of your liking one of your companions better than the rest, provided that your affection remains within the bounds of a sincere and pure feeling. It is even difficult to love many persons quite equally ; nature is averse to this kind of symmetry. Usually, she leans to one side more than another. The thing is, even in the warmest affections, to remain masters of ourselves, and submissive in everything to the law of God, because we must love God above all things, and never break one of his commandments for the sake of any one. When one of your companions offers you his friendship, and asks you for yours, you ought to see carefully what he is, and not look solely to external advantages. If he is solidly Christian, virtuous, and good-tempered, and you, on the other hand, feel your-

self drawn towards him by an honorable sympathy, nothing prevents you from responding.

But in this case you ought to keep to your engagements, and be careful not to go from one to another, which is the mark of an inconstant heart, and of one incapable of deep feelings.

LXXXVII.

The Joys of a Pure Conscience.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WHAT you tell me touching your fidelity to your religious duties, and your resisting the attacks of the evil spirit, is the greatest consolation to me. I can really say that I have the heart of a father for you, on account of your progress in virtue, and the generous manner in which you have requited my care. God has evidently taken possession of you; you love Him, and He loves you in return. For this reason, my dear child, your heart has become the abode of happiness. All your loving faculties have been refined, and they are, in fact, what constitutes happiness. Debauchery is nothing but frightful selfishness, which kills everything tender and lofty in us,

Real love, far from being willing to tarnish by vice the object loved, would readily suffer death for this object of a real worship, and this disinterested purity is rewarded by a dilation of soul which is interior joy. This is what you feel, and I myself experience at it a joy equal to your own.



LXXXVIII.

Poetry upon the Death of Christ.

SOREZE, *October 18, 1858.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

HOW thankful I was for your little remembrance. I should have answered you immediately, but just fancy, for the last three weeks I have been turned into a scribe, a regular clerk, reading letters, answering them, employing a secretary, and ready to dictate like Cæsar, to *four in different styles*. What will most astonish you is, that I have filled the post of clerk precisely as though I was a supernumerary of the register office.

I say to myself, it is the will of God, and I am at ease.

My dear child, listen to this: —

Whilst Christ in agony on Calvary's height
 Was saving in His love the human race,
 Earth yawned, the day-star hid his wonted light,
 And from the bloody drama turned his face;
 The temple shook, the sanctuary's pride
 In naked emptiness the people saw,
 Hell roared, and heaven — no, heaven not even sighed,
 And death adored Him whom now gave it law,
 All save the sinner trembled at that hour,
 He saw, nor owned these tokens of God's power.

If after this you attempt to tell me that I am not
 a poet, you will strain the truth clearly.

Adieu, my very dear child, take care of yourself,
 love me, and above all admire my poetry. I embrace
 you.

LXXXIX.

The two Spirits.

SOREZE, *October* 18, 1858.

SIR,

THE information contained in the volume you
 have been so kind as to dedicate to me, was quite
 unfamiliar to me. The origin of the White Peni-
 tents of Avignon, their history, their rules, and the
 remarkable part taken in this foundation by my ances-
 tors of the Dominican Order. The perusal of your
 work has touched me deeply. I am convinced, Sir,
 like yourself, that we must oppose to the associations

of evil associations of good ; to the delirium of pride and the senses the opposite delirium. I never read a sentence of St. Paul, after having read Cicero, without admiring with what elevation and clearness the mind of God has confronted the mind of man. This single comparison suffices to convince me of the divinity of Christianity. How much more so the difference between the works of reason and those of faith ! Your "White Penitents of Avignon" has afforded me this pleasure. I trust their resurrection will be worthy of their cradle, and that if princes are no longer to be met with under their habit, we shall still find under it generous souls, capable of loving Jesus Christ, and of bearing His opprobrium *extra castra*, as St. Paul says, that is in presence of the world.



XC.

Upon the Death of a Christian Young Man.

SOREZE, December 28, 1858.

MADAM,

M. HEINRICH informs me of the misfortune which has befallen you both. He had fixed on your son a really Christian affection, and hopes precious to his faith. Death has destroyed all. It

has snatched from you a son in the flower of his age, when all his qualities, his piety and abilities seemed to mark him out as your honor, your consolation, and your life. It is a grievous stroke, madam, and did you not know God as you do, we should have to fear that you would not be able to bear it with resignation. But our God having Himself suffered the death of His Son, we find in that example wherewith to comfort the mother's heart, and to show her that even such cruel grief is not beyond the influence of the views of faith.

When a son is lost whose future is doubtful, we may believe that God wished to save him, and that death was to him the means to a happy eternity. When, on the contrary, he was pure and holy, we may believe that he was a victim for the salvation of others, and that his blood will weigh in the balance in which God judges the world. Your son was desirous of serving the Church, he aspired to write for her, he has left traces of this inclination to serve the great cause of Christian truth: now, however great the success of his labors, would he ever have done better than to die young before having done anything? His soul is the work which he has carried before God. It is the work which he has left to you, to his friends, to those who had hopes of his talents

and his devotedness. No one can ever do anything better, madam, than to die for God. It is sacrifice, it is martyrdom which has founded the Christian religion, and which sustains it. Your maternal grief forms part of the sacrifice your son has made: he has offered to Jesus Christ your tears, and mingled with his blood, they have been a joy to heaven and a blessing to earth.

Enter then, madam, into these pious and sweet thoughts. Follow the Mother of God up to Calvary, in order to await with her the day of the resurrection. I beg of you to excuse these lines which you desired. Although no Christian is a stranger to any other Christian, I should not have ventured to write them had not friendship forced my hand. Pray accept them for the sake of the motive which dictates them, and with them the homage of the respectful sentiments with which I am,

Madam,

Your very humble and obedient servant.

XCI.

Friendly Words. — Soreze Again.

SOREZE, *March 4, 1859.*

I AM really afflicted, my dear friend, at the loss you have sustained in that good, amiable, and pious young man. His looks pleased me very much when you introduced him to me. He is now before God. How quickly everything goes forward! I am the only one left to love you. Why do you want me to tell you so? Do you not hear me saying so every day? You can have no faculty for hearing beyond time and space. Cicero says, I think it is in the *Somnium Scipionis*, that the stars perform music in their course through the heavens, and that during the night they may easily be heard by those who know how to listen. I wager you have never heard them, since you do not hear in my heart the music of your name and memory. I love you, then, I love you, I love you really! even although now and again a little dark cloud crosses your face, and does not leave you that beautiful and constant serenity I so much prize.

I have at last obtained an imperial decree, just take notice, *an imperial decree*, with my name in full

thus set forth, *Master Lacordaire*. You see how well I stand at court! This decree authorizes the borough of Sorèze to give me the parish church and the piece in front. I immediately got the front scraped, the holes filled up, the place paved, and at the present moment a beautiful railing is being made which will rest upon a foundation of cut stone, and will end in two pedestals, the gate, on which we shall put the statues of Pepin the Short and Louis XVI., the first the founder of the abbey, the second of the military school of Sorèze.

The railing will be up at Easter, and you will see it with your two bright black eyes this summer, when you are kind enough to come and see me.

I was pleased with the Abbé X.'s article in the last number of the *Correspondant*, and I heartily approve of your project of undertaking with him a discussion of the religious questions of the day.

I think the day is drawing near when we shall have to defend many things.

Adieu, my very dear friend. I love and embrace you as you deserve, that is to say, very tenderly.

XCII.

Flowers, Fruits, and Scholars.

SOREZE, *June 15, 1859.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR letter announced the coming of some dahlias ; they have come, and are long ago set in the botanical gardens. M. de T. told me they would be very fine, but they are not coming forward quickly, although we are having alternate heat and rain.

You talk to me in the same letter of planting an orchard at Sorèze, in a part of the park. It is true our vines have succeeded wonderfully in the corner where we planted them. But this privileged corner, sheltered from the sea-breeze, is the only well protected one in the park. Where could we put trees which would withstand that destroyer ? Then comes the question of the boys. Although the Institute is select, and is what it ought to be, we ought not to expose youth to those little temptations to gluttony.

Outside the park we should have to rent an enclosure, and then you are well aware of the amount of fruit that would be left us. Well, when you come to see us, you will perhaps be able to make out a means

of realizing your idea, of which I feel all the importance.

Our distribution of prizes will take place on Tuesday, the 10th of August. I shall be leaving the next day to visit our convents and colleges, and on the 21st of September I shall fall back upon St. Maximin's. In case I cannot see you at Sorèze, we shall at least meet there.

In the meanwhile let me assure you of my constant affection.



XCIII.

To the Novices of the Order of Saint
Dominic.

SOREZE, *July 11, 1859.*

VERY DEAR SONS IN OUR LORD,

I RECEIVED with the liveliest consolation, on my birthday, the wishes you address collectively to me. Your filial spirit towards me is not the only thing in your letter which touches me; your devotedness to our order, our dear province, to your own solid progress in monastic virtues, touched me too. I am firmly convinced that God has raised up our province of France to make it one day the cradle of the restoration of our order. As yet young and weak, it will

grow gradually by the spirit of regularity, simplicity, apostolic activity, denial of self and our own opinions; and lastly by union of heart in the tradition of the province. On my side, I will, during the years which Providence may give me, do all in my power to secure good observance and increase the flock.

I recommend myself personally to your good prayers, and renew, very dear sons, the expression of my devoted sentiments in our Lord.

XCIV.

Upon the Passions of Youth.—A Soul
between God and the Abyss.

SOREZE, *September 14, 1859.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I LEARNED with joy from your letter that you had just lately been to your religious duties. This piece of good news really touched me, first for its own sake, and secondly because it proved to me that you were faithful to your promises, in spite of the seductions of the society in which you move. I am convinced that, if you could go to confession and communion once a month, wherever or in whatever position you might be, you would be safe. Your

first letter, telling me of the lukewarmness into which you have fallen since the vacation, gave me a great deal of pain, and I doubted whether you would have the courage to keep your promise during the month of September. It was therefore a great comfort to me to find I had miscalculated.

You have very strong passions, sensual rather than elevated, unsubdued pride, extravagant love of the world, a yearning after ease and luxury, and finally wherewith to satisfy every desire; this is the fearful side of your nature and your position. On the other hand, your faith is pure and genuine, you fear God and His justice, you have begun to understand the mystery of salvation by the cross of Jesus Christ, and last of all, your heart, long cold and selfish, seemed to me to lay itself out for the impressions of devotedness and friendship; this is the hopeful side. You have still a great deal to do. More than once, you will excuse my saying so, I began to doubt about you. The first letter you wrote me was that of a heartless wretch; the last two consoled me, and showed me I was mistaken in you. So long as you open your mind to me, and are not repelled by the frankness with which I shall lay bare your defects and vices, nothing will go wrong; but the day on which you find me a burden to you, pride and sensuality will

master you, and you will become capable of everything, except perhaps of dishonoring yourself according to worldly notions of dishonor. I say *perhaps*, because the abyss in which a soul, not straitened by having to work daily for bread, stands when separated from God, is a bottomless one. Oh, how I desire to save you! How I despaired of you! How great have been my efforts to give you an insight into what Jesus Christ is. I could have no greater consolation than to see you a real Christian, and although you will doubtless never return me all the affection I bear you, I shall be satisfied with knowing that you really love and serve God.

Adieu, I talk freely to you; you must get used to it, for correspondence which is not free is worth neither the paper nor the time given to it. I repeat, and embrace you in doing so, that your two last letters gave me joy.

XCV.

Encouragement in the Fight.

SOREZE, *September 27, 1859.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

ON my arrival at Sorèze yesterday I found your letter. It convinced me of two things, of your conversion and of your affection. I am sure you are converted to God, since you speak humbly of yourself; and not satisfied with knowing the misery and littleness of man in general, you recognize those two things in yourself, which no man can do unless enlightened by the grace of Jesus Christ. You were a selfish and vain child, wrapped up in yourself, delighting in your name, your rank, your fortune, your horses; and subject, notwithstanding your pride, to all the movements of depraved flesh. Now although there are still in you remnants of the sinful man, you have become humble and chaste, and consequently a lover of God instead of a lover of yourself. This is why you are really converted, and you have nothing to do but to keep this road, by pushing forward with the help of the means which have led you to your present position.

Then, again, my dear friend, I am convinced of your affection, because you speak to me with simplicity and with the accent of the heart. Therefore, for the future, I should consider it a grave fault to be doubtful about you, notwithstanding your youth and your former powerlessness to love sincerely because you loved yourself alone. See, how I talk. Freedom, a holy freedom, appears to me to be the best proof of attachment to a man. We talk plainly only to those we love. Besides, with me you are as yet only a child, and you are my penitent to boot. These two reasons, setting aside the question of friendship, would entitle me to treat you with the freedom I do. When you find my letters too severe, you may retaliate by burning them. I shall be seeing you soon, and we will go thoroughly into the question of your studies.

Adieu, my very dear friend, I embrace you with the conviction that I know and love you.

XCVI.

Upon the First Victories of Chastity.

TIRLEMONT, *Feb.* 6, 1859.

HOW happy I am, dear friend, at what you tell me touching that poor girl! God will bless this victory which you have gained over yourself. However violent your passions, never let yourself be persuaded to blight another soul with the dishonor of them, in order to lessen, in appearance, the shame of your own. Happy they who have made no victims! They are scarce. Few are they who will present themselves before the judgment of God without having ruined any one. Youth is sacred on account of its perils. Respect it always. The good done by respecting it is of a kind which most keenly touches the heart of God; for God is eternal youth, and He delights in those who bear for a moment, on the quick decline of our lives, this likeness to Himself.

Adieu, dear friend, I expect to be returning about the middle of April, but what are the hopes and plans of man? God alone knows why we begin, and how we shall end,

XCVII.

On Friendship in Jesus Christ.

SOREZE, *October 11, 1859.*

HAVE you noticed what I have just said, *my dear father?* You have, in fact, become my father since you consented to look after the spiritual concerns of my soul. I do not know whether you are like myself, but I can no longer love any one without the soul slipping behind the heart, and Jesus Christ being the uniting link. Communications no longer appear to me intimate, unless they become supernatural; for what intimacy can there be where we do not go to the depths of the thoughts and affections which fill the mind with God? I am aware that friends do not confess to one another, do not help one another out with their penances, but make their spiritual life a life hidden from all eyes, even the eyes of those they love best. But is this really friendship? Is not friendship the complete gift of one's self, and when Jesus Christ has become ourself, can we really give ourselves without giving Him who forms but one with us? How can conscience be excluded from the gift of one's self, if that gift be complete? And how

give one's conscience without a confession of all that is good and bad in us? It is such a sweet thing to humble ourselves before those we love. And if pride keeps us back, if we put on a mask even before our friend, do we love him? It is certain that confidence is the first element of friendship; one might even say that it is but the vestibule of it, because sacrifice is the sanctuary: now, does confidence exist where there is no confession; and is confession anything else but supernatural confidence?

It was then quite natural that you should become *my father* on the day when Jesus Christ gave you His priesthood, and on which you were able to absolve me from, and cure me of my faults with His blood.

I am now thinking about death, and I imagine nothing can be sweeter in death than to be assisted by a priest who is our friend. Friendship so greatly facilitates openness, humility, and candor! What a grace to die in the arms of a man who has the same faith as ourselves, who knows our conscience and loves us!

XCVIII.

On Fidelity in Friendship.

SOREZE, October 20, 1859.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR letter, in which you tell me your grief at my silence, crossed the answer you were expecting. This is why I was less quick in consoling you for my silence, which you see was not at all grounded upon anything internal. I was tempted to answer you by the single word "*modicæ fidei, quare dubitasti?*" How could you doubt about me? You know how thoroughly yours I am by nature and grace. Don't give way then for the future to this uneasiness which does so much harm without any ground. Fidelity is my most innate virtue, in the matter of friendship as well as in that of convictions; and a man who has sacrificed his belief or his love is to me the object of an invincible repulsion. Consequently, nothing has of late more grieved me than the fickleness of souls. There are doubtless lawful conversions; but how many things are necessary to make a conversion honest and admissible! One might almost

say that God alone has the right of conversion, and that He alone can make it a holy thing.*

Your change of life, my very dear friend, naturally saddens you. You used to live in your family, in the midst of tender affection; to-day you are alone, in a room of your own, and what is unpardonable, you don't tell me where that room is, so that I do not know where to fix my thoughts on you. I was even afraid that my letter addressed to your former residence had not reached you. Relieve me of this fear promptly, and tell me what lucky street has received your *household gods*.

Tell me, too, that my letter has consoled you a little, and that you are no longer in that fit of melancholy. As for myself, I have still an occasional attack of it, the remains of the old man; but as I go forward in life, I feel my manhood and my disposition to rise superior to everything which may happen, on the increase. I have often thought that all I have done may be ruined, and I am used in thought to make the sacrifice of it, provided God and my friends do not abandon me. It seems to me, too, although this stroke would be the hardest, that if my friends did forsake me, I should not be unable to bear it. Alas! how many infidelities have crossed me in my

* It will easily be seen that this refers to political apostasy.

life! Friendship is an old tree, on which I can count as my own but a few autumn leaves. Shall I see them fall?

XCIX.

Italian Independence and the Temporal Sovereignty of the Pope.

SOREZE, *November 5, 1859.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

IN the questions which have been mooted for nearly a year I have been guided by a double love, the love of the Papacy, and the love of Italy, and I have never had any trouble in reconciling both. It seemed to me just that Italy should snatch her independence from the foreigners who were oppressing her: very just too, that she should demand and get a more liberal system of government than that to which the domination of Austria had condemned her: but on the other hand I considered it very just too and very desirable that the Papacy should keep its temporal domains. These two causes were, in my opinion, separated only by misunderstandings and accidents, and I relied on Providence for the triumph of both. Was this the intention of the French Government?

I believe it without venturing to assert it. Supposing it were not its intention, I trusted in a force greater than it to thwart its policy. Whatever the issue, fortunate or disastrous, I remained true to the two guiding points of my convictions, the independence and liberty of Italy, and the preservation of the temporal dominions of the Papacy. Man cannot command facts, but he can always preserve principles in his heart. If Italy finally throws off the yoke of Austria, if she gets a government in unison with her lawful wishes, and if, at the same time, Rome is saved, I shall thank God for it: if, on the contrary, one or the other of these causes is defeated through the fault of men, I shall regret and deplore it, but I shall not be accountable for it, since I shall have done, in my position, all that I could do for justice and truth.

There are, it is true, in Italy, demagogues and absolutists: but between these two parties, just as in France, there are a great number of honest and Christian men who wish for the good of the Church and that of Italy; who do not hold them to be incompatible, and who are working for both. The future is in their hands, whatever may be the momentary deceptions into which they may be driven by the excesses of demagoguery or by those of absolutism.

As for yourself, my dear friend, remain calm and master of yourself. I am happy that solitude is beginning to reign around your body and your soul: for nothing is more fatal than the intoxication of bustle. You must have suffered through what has been said of you and of myself in these circumstances: try and make up your mind to it, whilst ever directing your thoughts to God, justice, truth, and the future. Nothing is so fine as solitude in that company.

I embrace you and love you very perfectly.



C.

Upon his Candidateship for the French
Academy.

SOREZE, Nov. 16, 1859.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I AM desirous of letting you know frankly my opinion with regard to the kind expressions used by M. X., and reported to me in your last letter.

You may rest assured that I certainly should like a place in the French Academy, and that I am touched at the unsolicited favor with which my candidateship has been taken up by several of the most illustrious

academicians. This kindness, which has sought me out in retreat, to gain which I did not make a single advance, is perhaps the only public honor awarded to me during my life. I say *perhaps* out of respect for the choice made of me by the town of Marseilles to represent it in the last Constituent Assembly. With the exception of this election, I remember nothing in my life partaking of the nature of a public honor. This honor is quite compatible with my position as a monk. Bishops have sat in the French Academy; other ecclesiastics belonging to the regular clergy have found a place there; no one was surprised at it, because literary glory is of all things the one least fettered by anything like rank or condition. The Roman academies are peopled with religious, and I know a Dominican holding a very high post at the Pontifical Court who is a member of the Arcadia, and is called there Tityrus or Melibaus. He might, then, for graver reasons be a member of the French Academy.

So far so good. You will now ask me perhaps: Why don't you come to Paris? Why don't you lay yourself out as a candidate, since you covet the honor of belonging to the Academy, and you believe it compatible with the modesty of the habit you wear? Bossuet was not so nice or so sensitive. Quite true, my dear friend; but in the first place, Bossuet lived

at court, he did not live in a school two hundred leagues from Paris. This is one difference already. He was free, and you who have lived at Sorèze know how little time I have to myself.

Secondly : Bossuet, since he has been brought forward, lived in a religious age : his name and his cross met no hostile party at the Academy : he could present himself without risk, his genius in his hand. Can I, I who neither have his genius nor live in his age? Can I knock at the door of the Academy with the certainty of not exposing my name and my cross? Can I? What certainty have I of the majority or minority which awaits me? Did I expose only myself, I might make the sacrifice: but I carry with me the gods of Rome, *Dii indigetes*, and I carry them in an age which has as yet but a very questionable regard for them.

Is not my honest and respected obscurity worth preserving from such a danger?

Then in the matter even of literary honors, is it exactly the thing for a religious to do to seek them? and if that is not out of place at Rome, is it not a little venturesome at Paris? I leave it to your tact and friendship. Moreover, what does the Academy require? To be sure of my gratitude and acceptance. Now it is perfectly sure of both. My word was given

from the first day that I was told I was not altogether out of the question.

Whatever happens, my dear friend, I already consider myself honored at being thought of by so many men eminent in the literature of our country and age. If their votes do not raise me to the title of their colleague, the memory of not having been judged unworthy of it by them will remain to me.



CI.

Upon Detachment from Honors.

SOREZE, *Dec.* 7, 1859.

I RECEIVED both your letters at the same time. You are quite right in your opinion that no answer must be made to the article in question. It is better not to be aware of attacks which we mean to meet only by silence.

You tell me you are dead: that is a very happy notion of yours. Death is an admirable shield against the world and self, provided it does not go too far, and is confined to that beautiful death which consists in the total absence of human ambition of whatever nature, little or great. It has been my constant belief

that, with chastity, absolute disinterestedness is the strength, the honor, and the salvation of the priest. How many priests perish through desire! They are pure in body, I allow, but not in soul: they belong to fortune, a cruel and dishonoring mistress.

By the by, my dear friend, you seem to suppose that I yearned to belong to the French Academy: this is a mistake. I had never entertained an idea of it. The advances came from others, not only my friends, such as M. de Montalembert, and M. de Falloux, but from others, such as MM. Cousin, Villemain, Guizot. The question then was whether I ought to refuse or allow things to take their course. Madame Swetchine, on her deathbed, thought it would be a fault to refuse, because these spontaneous advances of eminent men to a monk, imply a homage to religion.

Now ought we to reject a homage done to God in the person of one of His ministers, who has done nothing to seek it, and who can confidently say he never entertained a desire of it? I have adopted Madame Swetchine's way of thinking, although the honor is accompanied by an obligation, and it goes against the grain with me to sacrifice a single inch of my complete independence.

I must tell you, my very dear friend, that I am at present finishing a little work upon St. Magdalen. It

will be of about from 150 to 200 pages in 12mo, and the aim of it is to revive faith in and devotion to that great penitent, one of the patrons of our order who has just summoned us back to guard her tomb at St. Maximin's, as well as the famous grotto where she spent the last thirty years of her life. This publication will appear about the end of next February.

My dear friend, you must be at the great festival in May. You will come and pick me up at Sorèze, and we will go together to St. Maximin's, then to St. Baume, after having assisted at the translation of St. Magdalen's head. Come now, I think that is a rendezvous you cannot refuse.

I like the idea of the *circumincersion* of thought and feeling you say exists between us. For Seneca said: "*Idem sentire et velle ea demum firma amicitia est.*" Alas! what a rare thing that is, and how few souls I have seen remain true to the programme of their youthful years. Don't you go and change: you would be the last plank of my wreck sinking beneath the waves. Adieu! I embrace you, and love you "*usque ad crucem.*"

CII.

The Monastery of San-Esteban at Salamanca.

SOREZE, *April 3, 1860.*

SIR,

I RECEIVED, a few days ago, the letter you were kind enough to write me, as well as the accompanying Spanish manuscript and pamphlet. I cannot say I have read the two little works, being ignorant of the Spanish language, which I never studied, because, although for the last seven years I have been close to the Pyrenees, I have never had occasion to cross them. But your good and long letter, which I understood very well, has given me a very sufficient notion of the marvels and memories of our old monastery of San Esteban at Salamanca. I could picture to myself too, very clearly, the face of the good Fray Pedro Manobel, your cicerone, and was touched at the sentiments the good old man expressed towards me. Of all the grandeur of the Dominican Order what exists in Italy is the sole remnant, and God only knows how long our monks will still inhabit those monuments built by their ancestors! Antiquity is daily sinking out of sight beneath our steps. Everything changes, everything disappears, but to return. Man cannot

destroy any of the fundamental conditions of his existence, and religion, which is one of them, can for the future exist under no other form than that of Christianity.

I am obliged to you, Sir, for having thought of me in our old manor of Salamanca, and for having sent me so much valuable information about this glory of our Order.

Pray accept the expression of my gratitude, as well as that of the high esteem with which I remain,

Sir,

Your very humble and devoted Servant.



CIII.

Duties towards Servants.

SOREZE, *April* 23, 1860.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I DO not know where to address this letter, for in yours you do not tell me whether you are going to live at Toulouse or return to R——. Be careful to put at the head of your letters both date and place. You know that I am a very precise methodical man, and your friendship for me will easily induce you to gratify me upon this point.

The news you give me of your soul is not over-bad. I do not at all like to see you with companions whose conversation is not what it ought to be, and which at bottom you disapprove. I never frequented, even when quite young and an unbeliever, such company; it would have inspired me with nothing but contempt. You say you will only go out walking with them, to the theatre or restaurant: who will answer for your going no further? And then, is it a slight thing to listen to talk more or less scandalous, when one knows Jesus Christ, and is desirous of serving Him? Alas! my poor dear friend, I am uneasy about you, at the thought of your being with souls inferior to your own; and I would give a great deal to see you choose select company, such as your own heart must want.

You have said nothing about the way you parcel out your day: your rising, your going to bed, and the employment of your time; and yet this is almost a man's whole life. Do not forget that a faithful affectionate servant is one of the greatest blessings God can send us, and a very important element of happiness. But you will only get a man of this sort by looking after his soul, that is, by teaching him to know and love Jesus Christ. In order to this, you must teach him his catechism, say your night prayers

with him every evening in your room, go to communion with him on the great festivals of the year: in short, be penetrated with the thought that he is of the same blood as yourself, and that he is your superior if more virtuous than yourself. These practices may seem strange to you, and yet they were those of our fathers. In all mansions, not to say all well-ordered houses, the servants were taught the Christian Doctrine, they said their prayers with the family, they went to communion with it on the *good festivals*, according to the expression of the time. Such were the customs of our ancestors, and consequently their servants grew old in the family. Take an interest then, my dear friend, in the soul of your servant, like I did in your own. Try to free it from its swathing bands, to raise and purify it: you will gather the fruit of it. Are not your relations with me a proof of what I say? What were you to me or I to you before God inspired me with the thought of saving your soul.

Your soul gradually opened out; it understood Jesus Christ, it gave itself: you are become a young man capable of loving and of being loved. Now what we have done together you may do with a being inferior to you in birth and fortune, but your equal before God and the gospel. If you were a libertine, you

would not hesitate to let your servant into your vices, and make use of him as an instrument of the vilest passions: how, being a Christian, could you blush at humbling yourself before him for virtue's sake?

Do not forget, my very dear friend, the fundamental question of confession and communion. Without these two arms your life is lost.

Adieu, my dear friend, be good, sincere, loving, and penitent. The humiliations of penance will have to preserve you from the perils you are about to encounter. I embrace you as my child, and assure you of the deep sentiments God has given me for you.



CIV.

Upon Pantheism.

SOREZE, *May 2, 1860.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE just read your letter and your philosophical essay. That production pleased me very much; it is solid, and written in a way to captivate the imagination, a very great point in the high regions of metaphysics and religion. I will say but one word on pantheism. You seemed to me to understand the possibility of plunging into this absurd abyss, by a

sort of yearning after the infinite. For my part, nothing ever appeared to me so clear a negation of the infinite as pantheism, as well as of the finite ; it is the shipwreck of both in the vague notion of the *indefinite*, which is nothing more than the possibility of the perpetual extension of the finite in the unbounded immensity of the infinite. The indefinite, apart from the two terms finite and infinite, is the last degree of the incomprehensible and the absurd. This is why pantheism revolts me by a direct and absolute negation of common sense. I prefer downright materialism. There we have nothing but matter, which exists because it does, and there's an end of it. I should have been better pleased, then, if you had not done pantheism the honor to believe that it can seduce the mind by a certain charm. To my mind it is nothing but an immense void.

Do you mean to tell me that I did not inform you of the ugly turn the influenza was taking with me? That is strange. I was firmly persuaded that, in my last letter but one, I had enlisted your sympathy for my poor body, which, however, is daily getting stronger, and is getting ready for that beautiful festival of St. Maximin's, from which you will have the courage to absent yourself. I am persuaded, my dear friend, that you would have nursed me admirably,

and that your presence would have been a vivifying balm to me. But that was not worth the while. I reserve you for the great occasion when they will have to close my eyes. I entertain the hope that God will give me some presentiment of it, and that I shall be able to have you with me in that terrible passage, during which no one is sure of being calm. I often think of it, although as yet I have no definite sign of the end.



CV.

Bad Company.

SOREZE, *May 8, 1860.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR letter brought me two pieces of good news. The first is your having broken with some of your former companions, whose conversation was not strictly moral. I cannot sufficiently congratulate you upon this resolution. For, believe me, all our life depends upon the persons with whom we live on terms of familiarity. Familiarity gets us used to things as well as to persons, and what at first appeared to us odious and abject, ends by entering into our habits. The ear loses its delicacy, the heart its modesty, the mind its clearness; we end by taking to

what once appeared repulsive, and from words we proceed to acts, which complete our corruption. This is the history of the propagation of evil upon earth. I am then delighted at your having broken with those young men, and that you have found others more worthy of you. Be convinced, you do not require much to distract you pleasantly. If one real friend is enough, a few comrades are enough too. Besides, good company begets good company, and although less numerous than bad, it also, thank God, may be found in some strength. Thank you for your portrait. It will remind me of the time of your first youth, and will not grow old like ourselves.

Adieu, I expect you soon. I repeat to you beforehand all that I am to you.



CVI.

Practices of Christian Life.—To a Pupil
of Soreze.

SOREZE, *June 15, 1860.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR last letter gratified me ; it proved to me that you are not indifferent to the school and your masters, and also that you are keeping to your good

principles in the midst of the world. You have already been able to see the difficulties, sadness, and pain in which it abounds, and I congratulate you upon it, because you will have for it the feelings with which it ought to inspire you.

You know what I told you to keep you *immaculatum ab hoc sæculo* ; a very simple little rule, but one to which you will be invariably faithful. Prayer regularly morning and night, a short reading from the Gospel, monthly confession and communion, some penitential practice to keep you humble and chaste, and preserve you from the spirit of the world. This little will suffice, will preserve you, will raise you above the life of the senses, will keep you to God, will strengthen and console you.



CVII.

Upon Polemics.

SOREZE, *June* 19, 1860.

SIR,

I AM thankful to you for having called my attention to the *Examen des Dogmes du Christianisme*. I had heard talk of it, but did not think of reading it, these kind of publications being usually very

shallow, although they do harm. Then again, I have been very little engaged in controversy, being convinced that the direct exposition of Christianity ruins beforehand all the objections brought against it. Christianity is like an old monument, with deep and solid foundations, and controversy like the sand driven against that indestructible mass by the wind.

I do not, however, deny the utility of answering attacks, and I should be glad if no hostile book appeared without getting a good stroke from the sword of truth. God has not left me sufficiently at liberty to wield this avenging blade. I have never written but at intervals, amid a multitude of occupations, and age, instead of bringing me retirement and rest, has but increased the weight of my multifarious duties. My happiness would be to spend my declining days quietly in writing for God, Jesus Christ, and the Church. But necessity commands me as it does all men, and my submissive powerlessness is doubtless more pleasing to God than the realization of my inmost wishes would be.

I am very sensible, Sir, to the sentiments you express in my regard, and beg you to accept mine, and to remember me before the Justice and Goodness which enlighten us both.

CVIII.

The Senses. — The Occasion.

SOREZE, June 25, 1860.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WHAT you tell me of your soul gives me great fears for the future. What strikes me in the first place is that you do not talk of loving: it is not sincere and deep attachment of the heart, even were it unlawful, which seems to captivate you, but simply the senses. Your heart seems dead, whilst your imagination is running after exclusively fleshly dreams. This is a state of mind which gives me pain. You think that if *an occasion offered* you would not resist. What an expression! The occasion, that is to say, a chance, a casual facility, something with which the heart has nothing to do! Fortunately, my dear friend, the man of honor never finds such occasions. You must of your own will either seek out places of infamy, to lead astray a wife from her husband and children by premeditated treachery: or gain the affections of a young innocent person, hidden in the bosom of her family, to which honorable confidence has given you an entrance; or seek out in the lower

ranks of the working classes, a poor creature who cannot resist your wealth, your youth, your good looks, your deceitful promises, and make her for a time the instrument of pleasures from which she will one day reap nothing but desertion, contempt, and ruin of body and soul. Such are, my dear friend, the only alternatives left by nature and society to the passions you are nursing. In all this there is nothing but crime, nothing fortuitous.

If you must have an occasion, it will be yourself who will seek it: it will not come and disturb your sleep, or snatch you from your solitude. This gives me a little comfort.

I see, too, you talk to me of *reason* which checks you. Reason is not to be despised, but is weak against the onslaught of the senses backed by the imagination. Scripture says: "*Nemo potest esse continens, nisi Deus, det.*" Now you do not feel the love of God, even whilst allowing that if you loved Him the miracle of chastity would be wrought in you. What will you then become? I do not know. I hope and I fear. I have hopes because you seek good company, and have broken with loose companions; because you are or seem to be determined to go regularly to confession and communion; because there is in you a sentiment of honor and religion; finally,

because I love you, and you seem determined always to open your heart to me. I have fears because you do not love God, because you are a stranger to interior and exterior mortification, because your fortune opens to you the great door of the passions, idleness; and lastly, because your heart has less share in your being than your senses. Oh! if by clasping you to mine, I could give you an idea of the deep joys of continence, and of what a soul is when mistress of the body! If you could experience what I do, and look upon your body as a focus of tenderness and sacrifice for God! But all this is hidden from you. You have as yet reached but the vestibule of virtue, and you will perhaps not reach the sanctuary without having profaned the temple! This does not prevent me from loving you: and it may be that my fear contributes to it as much as my hope. God loves man: how could man do other than love his fellow-man?

Adieu, I embrace you, and leave without quitting you.

CIX.

Upon the Perils of Youth.

SOREZE, *July 26, 1860.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

ON my return from the Rennes waters, I received your letter of July the 8th, and I have just received that of the 24th. My silence was occasioned by the backward state of my correspondence, but I had you in my mind, and was daily looking out for a moment to write to you. Your last letter frightens me. It appears to me that you are on the eve of a fall: it would be a terrible thing for you: for your return, if once you fell away, would be extremely difficult. When vice which has been curbed breaks out, it is like a torrent which has burst through the dyke and destroys all before it. You have received much: Jesus Christ has discovered Himself to you in an especial manner. Ah, could you but love Him! Could you but love His body torn and macerated for you! But this adorable body speaks but faintly to you: it is as much as you do to give it a passing look, and the eye of your heart immediately turns away to follow the flesh under its seductive

forms. I am sure you have been a long time away from confession and communion, and still you promised me to go every month.

What can you expect to become with a life of perpetual pleasure, nowise counterbalanced by the serious practices of religion? Come and see me soon. You know that our exercises will take place on Monday the 6th of August, and the distribution of prizes the day after. A few days afterwards, I shall leave for Burgundy, make a few visits on the road, and shall be back about the middle of September.

Consequently the only opportunity we shall have of seeing each other will be at the distribution of prizes or the few days following. You ought never to let a month go by without coming to see me. You can do this very easily, since your town is very near Toulouse where you are going to study the law. For, all things considered, you had better study it there. Without frequent intercourse between us you will go to ruin, my dear friend, and the barrier once down, God only knows what will become of you. I am your ship and your haven: never forget this. I shall expect you then at the beginning of August, and in the meantime I embrace you and renew to you the expression of my very sincere friendship.

CX.

On the Vocation to the Religious Life.

SOREZE, *July 31, 1860.*

THE great point for you is to find out whether you have a real vocation, whether you understand the sacrifice of your whole being to the cause of God, of Jesus Christ and of His Church. It did, in fact, appear to me that you had the germs of it, with the exception of a rather wayward and somewhat unmanageable character. This is, in my opinion, the great obstacle in your way. Can you be obedient? Can you defer to the authority of superiors? Will you not cling to your own ideas and will? To reform your character in this respect will certainly try you, but every man who gives himself to God must reform something. You have, then, to look into yourself, and to see whether you feel called to leave the world in order to devote yourself to the education and instruction of youth. If you do come I shall be very glad, as I have always esteemed and trusted you, and am persuaded that God will return you a hundred-fold what you give Him.

CXI.

A Word about Italy.

FLAVIGNY, *Sept. 4, 1860.*

I HAVE been at Flavigny for the last three days, and am well pleased with my visit as well as with the results of the congregation we held. I found all hearts at peace, sincere confidence in me, and an affection manifested by unequivocal signs. I am authorized to choose a provincial vicar, and to entrust to him the heavy burden of administration. I shall be behind my vicar for the weightier cases, and represent the province before the public.

It will considerably lighten my work, and will give me more rest, and allow me to take up pursuits more in harmony with my tastes, as well as with the interests of religion.

My dear friend, I am not thoroughly up in deceptions, because I have never been thoroughly up in deceptions. What we are witnessing must necessarily have happened, supposing Italy once left to herself; and although the heads of that country appear to me to manage the affairs of her nationality and her liberty badly, still I am convinced that the final result will

be the federation of Italy, fresh safety secured to the temporal power of the Pope, and the ruin of despotism and demagoguery. This is my firm belief, because God stands behind man, and is greater than man.



CXII.

Same Subject.

SOREZE, *Oct. 1, 1861.*

WHAT is going forward in Italy will become a supreme struggle between the demagogical and constitutional parties. Everything in the plans of all the powers is so confused that it is impossible to foresee the immediate issue of events. But I still hold to the belief that Italy will get rid of Austria, will be federate, that the Pope will recover a sufficient portion of his states, and that the future will be preferable, both in a temporal and spiritual point of view.

The designs of man cannot prevail against the force of things and the will of God.

CXIII.

A Soul hesitating between God and Evil.—
Warnings, Menaces, Entreaties.

SOREZE, *Oct. 4, 1860.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I AM very sorry I shall not see you before the end of October. Your visit would have given me real pleasure, and have afforded me an opportunity of talking to you about your soul and its wants. The ennui, the sadness, and disgust you experience are quite natural in your state of mind and body. You have not to work for a living, and thus you are deprived of the ambition and necessity which urge on the greater part of mankind. All your time is before you, with unvarying pleasures which cannot eternally be filling up the twenty-four hours of the day. On the other hand, you have not got vice for a distraction. Not that it would be a remedy for you: on the contrary, you would experience in it a poignant bitterness which would disgust you with yourself.

Vice is so infamous in its pleasures, and at the same time so short-lived a resource, that it beguiles a few moments only at the price of the most crushing remorse. But it would at least, you may say, give you

a shock like what drunkenness gives to those who endeavor to forget their misfortunes in it. This shameful and dearly purchased shock you cannot have. God has shown Himself to you too clearly to admit of the possibility of your abandoning yourself for any length of time to the delirium of your imagination and your senses. You would be so vile in your own eyes, so branded, so tortured with remorse that experience would appear to you harder than everything else. God loves you, He has taken possession of you, He will not let you go. He will visit your faults with a chastisement by the side of which the most cruel punishment of your body would dwindle away to nothing. Consequently this door is shut to you. You may dream of vile pleasures, but you will never give yourself up to them without frightful remorse.

Still if vice is painful, and as it were, impossible to you, you are not in possession of the joy and peace of virtue. You are lukewarm and languid in God's service. Prayer, communion, penance, pious reading, all that sustains and enraptures the soul is almost unknown to you. In these matters you have no regular habits, you live upon fugitive impressions, going to confession and communion now and then, to mass on Sundays, keeping the abstinence days of the

Church, but not loving Jesus Christ tenderly, as your best friend, ready at every instant to press Him to your heart, to give Him your life, to suffer for Him in your body every opprobrium and every kind of pain, to be scourged and crucified for Him like He was for you. The Crucified One does not speak to your soul, and counterbalance in it those shameful desires. What then remains to you? A void. You are wandering in a dark and chilly tomb, haunted by frightful apparitions, ready to grasp at them as you would at immortal realities. Jesus Christ stops you, He reminds you of Himself, He says to you, I love you, I died for you; if you only knew the happiness of loving Me!

My poor friend, such is your state. It will only cease by your giving yourself to God. To this end it is not necessary to become a priest or a monk. No. A man may love God tenderly and ardently in every position. But you must *will* it; and in order thereto lay down an inviolable rule of your relations with Him. Daily prayer, morning and evening; monthly confession and communion, practices of penance and humility, which by humbling you, by chastening your mind and senses, will naturally increase your love. For love springs out of sacrifice, and especially out of the sacrifice of pride. You are vain, my dear

friend. You like show; you like your horse and your groom; you wish to be considered a fine young fellow and to be looked at; you are proud of your nobility; you are, in fine, a little animal filled with a variety of different kinds of pride, so natural to you that perhaps you do not even notice them. Consequently no one has more need than yourself of voluntary and involuntary humiliation.

See how I talk to you. Alas! it is because I love you, and would willingly suffer much to give you the love of God. You are naturally cold, and still there are resources in your heart. Your friendship for me is one of them; but you must make use of it in the supernatural order, and give me a detailed account of all that goes on within you. What a time since you have come to confession to me! Already you have begun to find this disclosure difficult, even to me, your friend. Come then and see me as soon as possible, and keep me well informed of your interior state. I no longer know an iota of what you do for God or against Him.

Adieu, my very dear child, I embrace and love you.

CXIV.

On Perseverance in Christian Trials.

SOREZE, *Nov.* 30, 1860.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

IT was with very great interest that I received your letter, and I was greatly consoled to find that you are holding courageously to the principles and sentiments of your education. It is the greatest reward I can receive for the affection I showed you. You are to-day able to compare the soul raised by Christianity above vile desires, with the soul sunk in the groveling instincts of the body.

Those poor young men no longer have even shame; victims of their senses, they have not strength enough even to throw a veil over the interior disorder of their imagination. They must discover themselves fully, and have forgotten how to blush. You, my dear friend, are profiting by the strength you acquired at Sorèze, with us; it sustains you, elevates you, consoles you under the eye of conscience, and whether you look to the future or the past, returns you a hundred-fold what it costs you.

You have some good companions at Paris, I

trust that they too will remain faithful to their post, and that you will find in their company both strength and pleasure. They are very distinguished young men. I advise you to see them as often as possible. Noble company is one of the first and purest pleasures of man, even supposing the atmosphere to be not very vivifying to virtue.

I also recommend you not to lay aside your old religious practices — no single one of them is useless. Willed and inspired by God for the wants of our present life, in the spiritual and moral order, they are as indispensable to the health of the soul, as the sun, food, exercise, and rest are to the health of the body.

Choose a director in whom you have confidence; see him from time to time; communicate, if not once a month, at least on all great festivals; think more and more of God, of Jesus Christ, of His Church, and your life as a Christian will for ever stand upon immovable foundations.

CXV.

Christianity and Democracy.

SOREZE, *Feb. 23, 1861.*

SIR,

IN my reception-speech at the French Academy, upon which you are kind enough to congratulate me, I did not intend to set up the American democracy as the ideal type of human societies, but to show by a palpable comparison the grave difference between the *spirit* which founded the United States of America, and that which since 1798 has been animating the majority of European liberals and democrats.

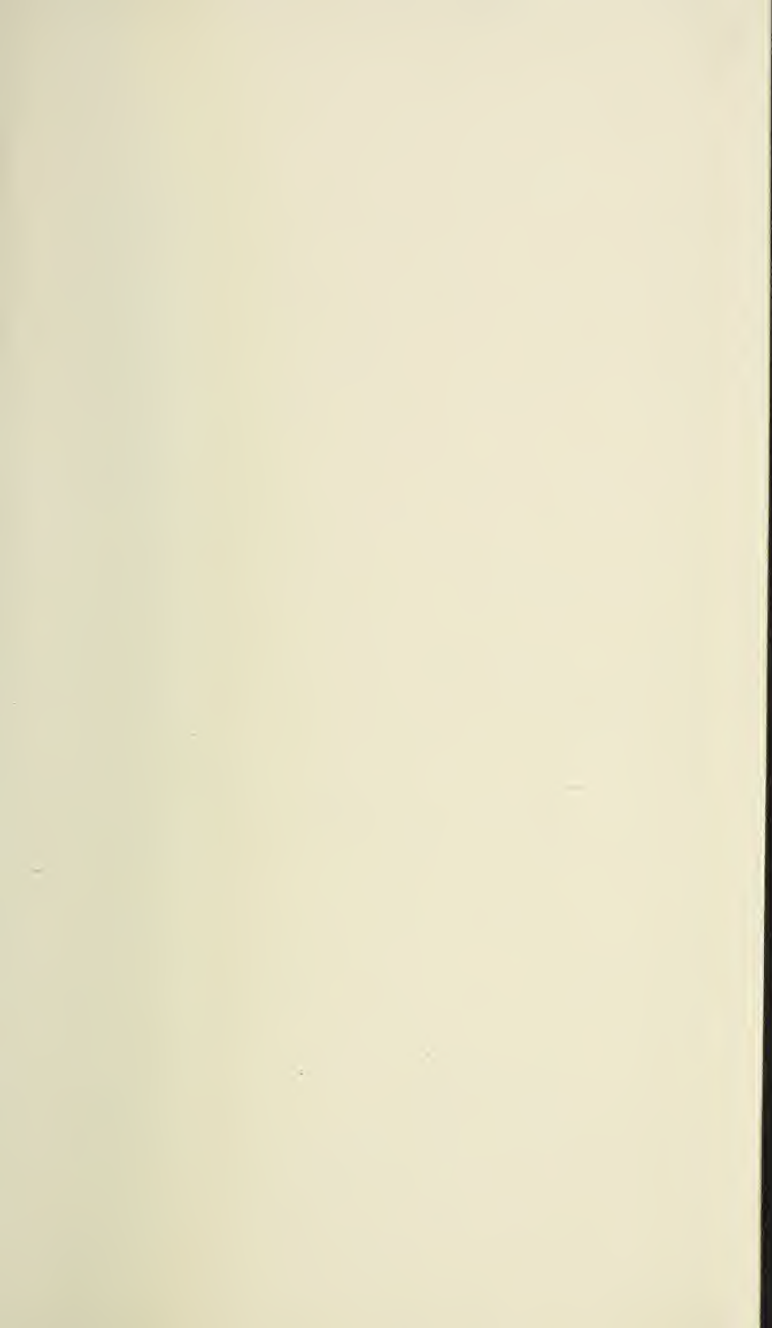
Even supposing the United States destined to exist for a long period, it would not thence follow that they are to be set up as the invariable and universal type of all free societies. In this, as well as elsewhere, variety is a law of the world, and assuredly no two things were less like each other than England and France from 1814 to 1848, although both were enjoying monarchical and parliamentary institutions. In this matter the *spirit* is the great point; it is the anti-religious, levelling, civil-centralizing spirit which has rendered abortive the great revolution of 1789, and

has always prevented it from producing the results we had a right to expect from it.

So long as this spirit exists, liberalism will be vanquished by an oppressive democracy, or by unbridled autocracy, and this is why the union of liberty and Christianity is the sole possible salvation of the future. Christianity alone can give liberty its real nature, and liberty alone can give Christianity the means of influence necessary to it. M. de Tocqueville understood this, and this is the great feature of his life. Christianity made him a complete liberal, pure, disinterested, superior to the parties which divided the men of his day, and God willed that despite this superiority, he should win the unanimous homage of France, Europe, and America. His opinions, like his memory, should be the compass of all those who think like you, Sir, and in the eulogium which I passed upon him, on a memorable occasion, I had no other intention than to throw into relief a figure evidently given us as a model. **708**

Chateaubriand, O'Connell, Frederic Ozanam, Tocqueville, such are in the generation which is dying out, our fathers and guides. I trust the race will live, and my consolation is to think that I follow, although at a great distance, in their footsteps.





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